

Max J. Friedländer  
Early Netherlandish  
Painting  
Pieter Bruegel

## Early Netherlandish Painting

'This new edition, translated from the German, brought up-to-date in some respects and augmented by about two-thousand new illustrations, will not so much revive (which would not be necessary) as make more readily accessible, more useful and, if only by way of comparison with the original, more pleasurable one of the few uncontested masterpieces produced by our discipline. These fourteen volumes—their publication begun at Berlin in 1924 and, after the appearance of Vol. xi in 1933, continued at Leyden from 1935 to 1937—summarize and conclusively formulate what M. J. Friedländer knew and thought about a field which he, with only Ludwig Scheibler and Georges Hulin de Loo to share his pioneering efforts, had been the first to survey and to cultivate. And what M. J. Friedländer then knew and thought will never cease to be worth learning.' (From the Preface by E. Panofsky)



# Pieter Bruegel

Max J. Friedländer

Early Netherlandish Painting

VOLUME XIV

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MCMLXXVI

A. W. SIJTHOFF, LEYDEN

LA CONNAISSANCE, BRUSSELS

Max J. Friedländer

Pieter Bruegel

COMMENTS AND NOTES BY

HENRI PAUWELS

TRANSLATED BY

HEINZ NORDEN



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The original German edition *Die Altniederländische Malerei* was published between 1924 and 1937 by Paul Cassirer, Berlin (Vol. I-XI) and A. W. Sijthoff, Leyden (Vol. XII-XIV).

ISBN 90286006X

Published under the direction of Ernest Goldschmidt

Design Frits Stoepman gvn, Amsterdam

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Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number : 67-13538

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This edition is published under the auspices and with the aid of the Governments of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands within the framework of their Cultural Agreements.

The publishers wish to express their gratitude to the chairman and members of the Committees for the Application of the Cultural Agreements between Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands for granting most valuable aid for research and editorial work, and to address also their sincere thanks to the members of the Advisory Committee, the Administrative Services of International Culture Affairs, the Centre National de Recherches 'Primitifs Flamands', Brussels, the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague, the editors, the translator and all those who by their work or advice have contributed to the realization of this new edition of Max. J. Friedländer's major work.



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# On the Publication of the Last Volume

In 1967, the centenary of the birth and ninth anniversary of the death of Max J. Friedländer (5th June 1867–11th October 1958), appeared the first volume of the English edition of his fourteen-volume *Altniederländische Malerei* (1924–1937). Now, less than ten years later, comes the publication of the final volume in the series, which has meanwhile grown to sixteen volumes. The new edition hereby completed will prove to be an indispensable follow-up to the original German edition, which has now become a rarity, since only 800 sets were published.

The new edition will be found indispensable for many reasons. Although something of Friedländer's highly individual idiom must inevitably be lost in any translation of his extremely personal and aphoristic style, Heinz Norden's English translation, for which we have the greatest admiration, has nonetheless made it possible for the work to become generally known throughout the whole world, albeit it should never be forgotten that the original German text is to be found in practically all the great libraries, as well as art libraries, and that it will thus continue to be available for consultation, especially by those who want to get to know the art historian himself in addition to the original language of a great writer.

Friedländer's opinions and his mode of expressing them were based on at least fifty years' connoisseurship which in his special field, 'Early Netherlandish Painting', remains unequalled to this day. It was buttressed by a much more extensive range of photographic and documentary material than was reproduced in the first edition of his work. The photographic material in question, which he bequeathed to the State of The Netherlands as a token of gratitude and which has since been kept at the Netherlands Institute for Art History in The Hague, has been of immense assistance in the preparation of the new edition. The creation of the *Centre National de recherches Primitifs Flamands* in Brussels, originally headed by P. Coremans, Director of the *Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique*, made it possible for a complete revision of the documentation to be undertaken by means of research done by the staff of the *Centre* itself and the provision as far as possible of new and better photographic material in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute in The Hague, as well as the co-operation of numerous museums and private individuals.

Now that the task of bringing out the new edition has been accomplished, it behooves those members of the Advisory Committee who have lived to see its completion to record their thanks in the first place to the Governments of The Netherlands, Belgium and the Federal Republic of Germany for their financial support, made available over the many years involved in the context of the Cultural Agreements between the three countries. Our next expression of gratitude must without question go to the publisher A. W. Sijthoff of Leyden and in particular to *Editions de la Connaissance* of Brussels for the care they have expended on the sixteen volumes. The path has not been strewn with roses. The project has been hampered by changing economic conditions and uninterrupted progress

prevented by the perpetually rising of costs which even threatened its final completion. As a result it has taken not the five years originally contemplated, but nine or ten to achieve publication. This has, however, worked to the advantage of the carefully prepared documentation, while thanks to the unflagging energy, the erudition and the perseverance of Ernst Goldschmidt, Director of *Editions de la Connaissance*, art historian and chairman of the Editorial Board, the aesthetic appearance of the volumes has remained at the high level envisaged at the beginning of the project.

The original German edition contained 1260 illustrations and it was the intention at the outset that this amount should be trebled to bring it up to 3600 or 3700. However, now that the last volume is to hand, more than 6000 illustrations prove to have been provided! This increase is due not only to the knowledge and enthusiasm of the editors and their assistants, but also to the fact that whenever help was needed it was invariably forthcoming from *all* sides, whether museums, art dealers or private collectors.

The members of the Advisory Committee are further well content that, over and above the augmented photographic material and the extensive documentation, the series has consistently continued to satisfy the requirements, carefully considered before the work began, which were spelled out in 1967 in the *Note to the Reader* in the first volume. This is thanks above all to the critical 'Comments and Notes' by the editors, Mrs. Nicole Veronée-Verhaegen and, from Volume VII on, Dr. Henri Pauwels (assisted by S. Herzog for Jan Gossart), plus G. L. Lemmens for the Northern Netherlanders. The annotations preceded by 'a small black dot' (●) have thus retained the same intelligent and comprehensive form throughout all the volumes and it is now possible to look back and state with confidence that the decisions on which the method adopted for the new edition were based were wise ones. Finally the assistance of Miss Monique Gierts from Volume I on and Mrs. Anne-Marie Hess from Volume VIII on must likewise be accorded the highest praise here.

It is our deep conviction that full justice has been done to the life work of Max J. Friedländer. Erwin Panofsky put the characteristics of that work into words so perfectly in the first volume that there is nothing more that can be added on that score here. What is worth saying again now, however, is that our knowledge has continued to increase, as a result of further building on the foundations originally laid by Friedländer and that this is as true of the period after 1967 as of that before it. This has meant that even in our latest addenda we have still had to include some works that have only been rediscovered in the last ten years. New literature, monographs, etc. on Petrus Christus, Rogier van der Weyden, Joachim Patinir, Jan van Scorel, Pieter Coecke van Aalst and Frans Floris, to name but a few, has been mentioned, as well as some new documentary evidence. Major problems which still seemed insoluble in Friedländer's time, the questions of the Van Eyck brothers, Campin/Van der Weyden, Joos van Gent, Quentin Massys, are now in our own day coming near to finding a more general consensus of opinion and the same goes for such artists as Hieronymus Bosch, Lucas van Leyden and Jan van Scorel and most certainly for a figure like Pieter Bruegel, who has been restored to more convincing proportions both as a painter and a draughtsman.



Modern photographic techniques have, through the results obtained by infrared reflectography<sup>1</sup>, opened up a whole new field of enquiry. They are an important aid to our understanding of the process of creation of panel paintings, since the revelation of the underdrawings can lead to a better insight into studio practice and the distribution of work in painters' workshops in the late Middle Ages.

It was never Friedländer's intention to compile a corpus of the Netherlandish painters of the 15th and first half of the 16th centuries. As he himself once remarked in 1937, he had not erected a building but 'Steine zum Bau herbeigetragen zu haben, darf ich mich wohl rühmen'. He deliberately omitted artistic personalities whom he had thoroughly studied, such as Juan de Flandes, Michael Sittow, Jacob van Utrecht and Aertgen van Leyden, as well as marginal figures like the Master of Moulins and the Master of St. Giles, who have since been identified. Whether he would have included them later on is to be doubted. And the same goes for modern X-ray examination. It may be remembered that not long before his death he confessed with a nice touch of humour that he had always been more interested in what was to be seen on the surface of a painting than what lay hidden beneath it.

Even if new insights and discoveries lead to different interpretations again, these sixteen volumes that have now been published will nevertheless remain indispensable for our knowledge of the terrain they cover. An anonymous critic wrote in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 6th July 1967 that the volumes of *Die altniederländische Malerei* that appeared between 1924 and 1937 'are the definitive expression of a mind of great brilliance and originality'. With the completion of this new edition a need has most certainly been met. Nor is that all: as a work of reference and touchstone guaranteed to stand the test of time, it will never, even though linked with a definite period, become obsolete.

J. G. VAN GELDER  
on behalf of the  
Advisory Committee  
February 1976

1. See J. R. J. van Asperen de Boer, *Infrared reflectography*, dissertation, 1st July 1970 (Amsterdam), the literature mentioned there and further, in particular, the study by the same author in collaboration with Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., 'Underdrawings in some paintings by Cornelis Engelbrechtsz', *Oud Holland*, 1973 (Vol. 87), pp. 61-94.

# Epilogue

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Books on the history of art come about in two different ways. One can resolve to do a book about Dürer; and then, to put oneself in the way of writing it, one examines the works and the documents. In the process it is almost unavoidable—if not at the outset then very soon afterwards—that an orderly plan is conceived, to which spontaneity of observation falls victim. On the other hand, one can be pre-occupied with works of art over many decades and in the end feel constrained to communicate one's experiences in book form.

It can have remained no secret to the reader that my text belongs under the second category, and perhaps it will be conceded that it carries a low handicap of bias and prejudice. Stringent critics, however, will find fault with me, on account of the way my work has come into being—gaps, contradictions, a certain lack of cohesion. I foresaw these reproaches, when I avoided the word 'history' in my title. Mine may not be a complete edifice; but I think I may claim to have contributed some bricks to the structure.

Views based on stylistic analysis are seldom definitive, hence I feel the need for re-examining much of what I have said, especially in the early volumes. To the present final volume I have appended substantial supplements and corrections, alas, burdening the reader with the irksome task of going back and forth between the original volumes and the supplements<sup>1</sup>.

First come three chapters about Pieter Bruegel. Quite possibly my presentation will show the figure of this master out of historical context rather than in. Only a fool gives more than he has.

1. As the reader will have noted, in this translated edition the supplements have been appended to the individual volumes.—Ed.

## A Note on the Literature about Pieter Bruegel

- 12 There has been a great swell of writings about Bruegel in recent years; but the work by R. van Bastelaer and Hulin de Loo, *Peter Bruegel l' Ancien*, Brussels, 1905, 1907, must still be regarded as the most reliable guide. The master's paintings are well-arranged in colour reproductions in G. Glück's *Bruegels Gemälde*, Schroll, Vienna, 2nd ed. (with valuable contributions by L. Burchard). Karl Tolnai, in *Die Zeichnungen Pieter Bruegels*, Munich, 1925, has catalogued the drawings, nearly all of which are there reproduced. Van Bastelaer, in *Les Estampes de Peter Bruegel l' Ancien*, Brussels, 1908, has provided a careful inventory of the engravings after Bruegel. Among authors who have endeavoured to interpret the master's work are Axel L. Romdahl, 'Pieter Brueghel der Ältere und sein Kunstschaffen', in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, xxv, Vienna, 1905, pp. 85-169; Max Dvořák, 'Pieter Brueghel der Ältere', in *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte. Studien zur abendländischen Kunstentwicklung*, Munich, 1928, pp. 219-257; and quite recently Charles de Tolnay, *Pierre Bruegel*, Nouvelle Société d'Éditions, Brussels, 1935, whose efforts to unearth new information have not remained without success 111.



# The Life of Pieter Bruegel

Pieter Bruegel appears in the Antwerp register of the painters' guild for 1551 as *Peeter Brueghels (de oude) schilder*. His name does not recur in these records. It would seem, therefore, that he never registered any apprentices in Antwerp. The designation *de oude*, the elder, can be explained only as a later addition, for in 1551 there was not yet a younger master of this name (2).

It is to van Mander that we owe virtually everything we know about Bruegel's life, and he tells us that the master was born near Breda, in a village called Breughel; but the two localities that bear this name today are not at all near Breda. One of them, however, lies in the vicinity of Brée (Breede) in the Province of Limburg. It has been suggested that van Mander mistakenly wrote Breda instead of Breede<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, Guicciardini speaks of *Pietro Brueghel di Breda*, at a time when the master was still alive, and he does not mention the village of Breughel as his birthplace. This deserves some credence. Van Mander may very well have inferred the existence of the village from the master's name, believing firmly that a painter of peasants must have grown up in a peasant community. One item of information, however, should point to Breda. Following van Mander, we would expect that the guild register read *van Brueghel* rather than *Brueghels*, which looks like a patronymic rather than a name derived from a locality. Van Bastelaer does suggest this is *une forme adjective flamande—le Brueghelois*<sup>2</sup>; but I can find no precedent for this in the guild register. I think it probable that the master came from Breda to Antwerp, that he was born in Breda and that his father already bore the name of the village from which the family originally came.

The year of birth has not come down to us. It is usually estimated to have lain between 1525 and 1530, but the basis for these calculations is uncertain. Van Mander says that Pieter Coeck van Alost was Bruegel's teacher. Such a relationship is neither documented nor borne out by stylistic criticism. Bruegel's name does not appear in the Antwerp guild register as an apprentice of Pieter Coeck. He did, however, marry a daughter of this master in October 1563. The issue of Coeck's second marriage, this Maria can scarcely have been born before 1543. Van Mander tells a romantic story of Bruegel having carried his later wife as a babe in arms, which would mean that his apprenticeship in Pieter Coeck's workshop fell into the period around 1545. Bruegel may, of course, have been this master's apprentice, not in Antwerp but rather in Brussels, where Pieter Coeck settled late in life and where he died. Again, he may have been Pieter Coeck's assistant in Antwerp, rather than an apprentice. Assistants were not carried in the guild register. One argument militating in favour of a relationship with Pieter Coeck is that Bruegel qualified as a master in 1551, directly after Coeck's death, which took place on 20th December 1550. On the other side, one might argue that van Mander arbitrarily and mistakenly deduced the apprenticeship from Bruegel's marriage into the Coeck family.

Bruegel himself died on 5th September 1569. His engraved portrait in the well-known series of 1572 shows him as a man of at least 45. This inclines us to assume

1. Van Bastelaer, *Pieter Bruegel*, Brussels, 1905, p. 145, note.

2. *Loc. cit.*, p. 42.

a rather early year of birth—although it was probably not very much before 1525.

The earliest pictorial works by Bruegel show no traces of any instruction by Pieter Coeck, but they do confirm other claims of van Mander, such as that Bruegel worked with or perhaps rather for Jerome Cock; and that he travelled to France and Italy; and another statement by van Mander, immediately following, is also amply confirmed by the pictorial evidence, namely that Bruegel *ghepractiseert nae de handelinge van Ieroon van den Bosch*, i.e. practised much after the model of Jerome Bosch.

Jerome Cock became an art dealer and publisher of engravings around 1546. He seems to have entertained great expectations of Bruegel's talent at an early stage. The upshot of the relations between draughtsman and publisher is visible in the form of many engravings that bear Cock's address and Bruegel's name as 'inventor'. Mathys Cock had died in 1548. He was a landscape painter, much praised by van Mander, and his work was sorely missed by his brother, who had a head for business. Young Bruegel seemed a likely replacement.

Van Mander apparently assumed that Bruegel travelled in France and Italy before he settled down in Antwerp as a qualified master; but this is not true. Bruegel wended his way South only in 1552 and 1553, when he crossed the Alps and spent some time in Rome. A number of drawings are dated 1552 and clearly recognizable as sketches done during this journey. Two engravings of riverscapes with mythological trappings are signed *Petrus Breugel fec. Roma 1553*. Taken literally, this would mean that the master did the actual engraving, a conclusion that has been called into doubt, probably wrongly. An undated drawing preserved at Chatsworth, a view of the *ripa grande* (31), confirms the Roman sojourn. Indeed, Bruegel seems to have travelled as far South as Naples and Messina.

He returned before the end of 1553—at least, there is a drawing of skaters at the Gate of St. George in Antwerp that is signed *P. Breugel delineavit et pinxit ad vivum 1553*. The date appears only in the second state of the engraving and is not to be relied on absolutely.

Around 1563 the master is supposed to have moved to Brussels, according to van Mander at the behest of Pieter Coeck's widow, whose daughter Maria he had married. In any event, he died in Brussels and is buried there.

Van Mander describes Bruegel as a quiet and taciturn man, given to occasional pranks. He mentions a large number of paintings by Bruegel, for the most part the property of the emperor, and he also names a certain Hans Franckert, a merchant with whom Bruegel is supposed to have been friendly. This Franckert joined the Antwerp guild in 1546, described as a *Norenborger*. Precisely in what capacity Franckert joined is not clear.

Our picture of Bruegel is based on drawings, on engravings after Bruegel and on paintings. There is no dearth of signatures and dates to provide a firm foundation for gaining insight into the master's development. The script and the signature underwent changes, providing clues for dating works that are signed but undated. After 1559, the master signed himself P. BRUEGEL, usually in Roman capital letters. Before that date he was *brueghel*, almost always in lower-case letters, with high ascenders in the b and the l. The latter style appears in 1552, 1553, 1556, 1557 and 1558, for example. The Bruegel-spelling appears only rarely if at all before

1559—the view of the *ripa grande* comes to mind. That sheet dates back to 1552 or 1553, but the name may have been added later. After 1563 Bruegel wrote the dates too in the Latin style.

Such drawings by Bruegel as are known are predominantly intended as models for engravings, and in a certain measure they are adapted to the exigencies of the burin<sup>3</sup>. Van Heemskerck, although in talent and aspiration miles from Bruegel, shared his approach in drawing for engravers. Taken with the engravings whose models have been lost, the drawings provide straightforward testimony, supplementing the paintings<sup>4</sup>.

A special group is formed by what may be termed fashion plates, all inscribed *na het leven*, from life (41). They may have been drawn with a view to publication of a kind of guide to local dress. Almost certainly they were not intended as preliminary studies for paintings. They were first sketched out in chalk and then worked over with the pen, more or less carefully. Tolnai has subdivided them into those he regards as authentic, others he thinks doubtful and still others wrongly attributed, but his distinctions seem arbitrary.

The earliest date on any drawing is 1552, on an engraving 1556—except for the two landscapes done in Rome in 1553—and on a painting 1557. I am ignoring for the time being *Cutting for Stone*, dated 1556, which was formerly in the Gerhardt collection at Budapest, because of the problems it raises.

What determined Bruegel's point of view and trend of mind was the impact of his experiences and commitments upon his native endowment. He began his work for Jerome Cock with topographical representations, imitations of Jerome Bosch and allegorical illustrations. Crossing the Alps, he was struck by the majesty of the mountains. Van Mander tells us it was said jestingly of Bruegel that he had devoured rocks and hills on his journey, only to spew them up back home on panel and canvas.

Bruegel flourished for only a relatively brief span, from 1552 to 1569, but in that time he travelled a long road, rid himself of bonds and restraints, cast loose from Bosch and became more and more himself.

The horizon of his mind reached far, hence, despite his interest in many things, all his work displays a certain aloofness from his themes. Counter to the rule, he expressed himself with greater freedom and spontaneity in his paintings than in his drawings, but that may be because his pen was always in thrall to the engraver. When he took it up, he tended to be more the professional, while with brush in hand he was an amateur in the true sense of the term, painting for the love of it. It is important to appreciate Bruegel's relation to Bosch, who had died some 40 years before, in 1516. About the middle of the century a general reaction set in in the Netherlands against the academicism of Rome and the monotony of iconographic orthodoxy. It took the form of a predilection for imaginary scenes. The paintings of Bosch were much sought after, collected and imitated. Jerome Cock the publisher took advantage of the demand. He had some drawings by Bosch, possibly left to him by his father Jan Wellens Cock. He put them out in engraved versions. Bruegel was attracted to this fanciful world, which provided food for his propensity for visual adventure. He resorted to it whenever his usually rather earth-bound imagination failed him, when it was a matter of representing the

3. Conscientiously catalogued, in *Die Zeichnungen Peter Bruegels*, Munich, 1925, by Tolnai, who is overly critical on some points.

4. Van Bastelaer, *Les Estampes de Pieter Bruegel*, Brussels, 1908, gives a complete and precise list of the engravings after Bruegel.

supernatural or the infernal. Actually, Bruegel's heaven is an empty place, while his hell is populated almost exclusively by Boschian creatures. Only the earth, the here and now, was Bruegel's proper realm. His following the trail of Bosch was probably due to external pressures, to the popular taste of his time. It is no accident that it is precisely 16th century voices who one-sidedly extol Bruegel as a 'second Bosch'.

When one reviews the *œuvres* of Bruegel and Bosch, one notes a difference in personality as well as the lapse of time. Bosch's fanciful dreams revolve around superstition and monstrosity, in contrast to Bruegel's robust realism. Bosch mocked and pilloried skilfully, while Bruegel laughingly put down what he saw. In Bruegel's art Bosch's Gothically lean, razor-sharp, needle-pointed shapes become juicy and bountiful. Bosch is full of spiritual wit, Bruegel of human sensuality.

To the extent that we know his beginnings, Bruegel started as a depicter of landscape, viewed the human figure at the outset from a distance. The locale was the primary element that dominated and held everything in its grip, while humankind was secondary.

Certainly his journey to the South affected him deeply. The breath-taking views from the Alpine passes probably shook up Bruegel's mind, knocked out of it much homely habit and traditional doctrine.

Man felt safe, in those days, only within city walls. To sally forth invariably meant, if not actual danger, at least the expectation of adventure. In our age of skyline drives, cable-cars and automobiles, we may find it hard to fathom the emotions that assailed a sensitive young painter upon first viewing rocky vastnesses devoid of human life. The Middle Ages had shunned the daunting mountains, but the Age of Discovery proudly defied their perils, and terror gave way to exaltation. Properly digested, the drama of vast solitude grew fruitful. Journeying from Antwerp across France, over the Alps through Italy all the way to Messina, Bruegel underwent sharp contrasts of climate, plant life, soil formation and natural lighting.

Netherlanders like Herry met de Bles had tried to capture impressions of the mountain fastness before Bruegel; but Bruegel did much more than toy with the theme. He projected it with serious and convincing realism, approaching it with elevated sentiments appropriate to the mighty actuality. The steep crags were made to enclose the habitat of saints, penitents and heroes. The unfamiliar grandeur of nature was to exemplify earlier states of the earth to the people of the plains. Remoteness in space from the familiar homeland subserved remoteness in time. In the light of the pantheistic sentiments then stirring, visible creation took the place of the invisible Creator as an object of worship and religious aspiration that begat humility.

Some landscape drawings from the period 1552-56 engage our attention, in the absence of any paintings known to date from these years. It is a mere handful of straightforward views, for the most part with a stark, dramatic and distant outlook, a fitting backdrop for heroic spectacles. The landscape seems almost to incorporate the monumental character of the High Renaissance in Italy.

The penmanship often reveals the draughtsman taking account of the engraver to come— the hatching is almost too parallel. The trees in the middleground are

suggested by circular rows of dots, the foliage in the foreground is sketched in brief, star-shaped strokes. Now and then large tree trunks with wavy contours loom to the fore, their branches sticking out. Aerial perspective in gradation is also taken into account, sometimes through the tint of the ink, and always in the more or less painstaking draughtsmanship. The massive soil formations are convincingly represented in their spatial orientation.

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If not an outright man of action, Bruegel was one whose imagination ran through every possible form of movement. No matter what the theme or object, he was ever the observer of what was going on, of what was coming into being. Action elements predominate in his formal idiom. It is, of course, true that nature herself does not actually move in the proper sense; but we are not off the mark when we speak of 'animated' forms while we are actually looking at structures at rest. The eye glides along lines, is drawn high, wide and deep, reverses itself at the sharp crags, the zigzag of the river bed struggling through the hills, the pointed switchbacks of the paths. Our feelings are set vibrating, almost in tune with the jutting rocks, the jagged pinnacles reaching for the clouds. Shapes and forms in such agitation are responded to as 'picturesque'. The conformation of the ground suggests tempests and avalanches, its wilful wildness is reminiscent of disaster. Bruegel sensed the forces that shaped the earth and the mountains became for him awesome witnesses of elemental upheavals.

Despite their untamed grandeur his mountainscapes command credence. The viewer never doubts that the rocks could take no other form, that the plants grew in this soil just so, that this was the only course for the river to follow. When we look at the pictures of Herry met de Bles, on the other hand—to cite but one example—we have a feeling that the stones might very well have been piled up some other way.

# The Paintings of Pieter Bruegel

The earliest painting by Bruegel that is signed and carries an inscribed date is a landscape in the Stuyck del Bruyère collection at Antwerp (4, Plate 4). It bears the name *Brueghel* in capital letters and a date of 1557. By way of comparison we have certain engravings, the so-called 'large landscapes', published by Cock around 1557 after slightly earlier drawings. In the painting the horizon lies rather high. A wealth of topographical detail is shown, with the zeal almost of a cartographer—the mouth of a river against a mountain background, woods, human habitations, castles, a tongue of land with a fortified town. To the fore is a continuous wall of foliage shrouded in twilight gloom, set against bright and chilly distances shimmering in a bluish-grey light with a slight violet tinge. The countryside opens up in depth. The main features, roughly parallel, run diagonally through the picture area—the river, the rows of trees, the folds in the ground.

Another painting in which landscape elements predominate turned up recently in private hands in Belgium and is now on the art market in Paris, London or New York (5, Plate 5). Although it is neither signed nor dated, it coincides so thoroughly in composition, coloration and brushwork with the signed painting of 1557 that it commands acknowledgment as a work of Bruegel. The horizon lies quite a bit lower than in the Antwerp picture. The scene represented is a *Temptation of St. Anthony*, and the main features are even more sharply diagonal. Once again we find slender tree trunks with feathery foliage, as well as even more forceful contrasts in tone—dark forest to the fore, a shining body of water to the rear. There is a similar town on a tongue of land. The saint, barely visible, is embedded in this mysterious setting, together with monstrous demons, in whom, however, Bosch's prickly sharpness has given way to chubby, rolling contours. The two paintings show Bruegel still as part and parcel of the glorious traditions of Flemish landscape painting, although his dramatic diagonals sacrifice Patenier's architectural tranquillity. Bruegel's texture is dense, investing his brushwork with a sparkling and luminous chiaroscuro.

A *View of Naples* in the Galleria Doria in Rome (7, Plate 6) agrees quite well with the two landscapes. Disregarding the fact that in this instance Bruegel had a clear-cut job to do—to provide a serviceable view of the port—we find the same detailed draughtsmanship, the same rather sharp tonal contrasts as in the other paintings. I rather think Bruegel did the Naples picture around 1558, from a drawing done in 1552. It is marked by a painstaking objectivity in respect of topographical detail, as are several of Bruegel's drawings, serving as a sound counterbalance to the dramatic and sensational themes that then appealed to popular taste.

For the period from 1555 to 1558 we have a number of engraved figure compositions and a fair number of preliminary drawings for them, giving a glimpse of an inventory of themes not necessarily of Bruegel's making. He probably received suggestions from many sides—ideas, picture puzzles, satires, allegories. A superabundance of notions pushed its way into pictorial print, a medium by its very

1. This pictorial poesy was not always as clever as all that. One particularly scurrilous commentator promulgated a novel explanation for some of the Seven Mercies, traditionally illustrated in representations of the Christian virtue of 'charity.' The naked were not being clothed, he suggested, but stripped, the hungry proffered stones in place of bread. The world was topsy-turvy.

nature accessible to the world of ideas. Working so close to the art of engraving, Bruegel came under the spell of poetically-minded humanists, but his creative ingenuity and predilection for the pleasures of the senses always won out over conundrum and intellectualism<sup>1</sup>. In his hands allegory always turned into symbolism.

I mention *The Alchemist* as an engraving satirically exemplifying contemporary customs and morals. The drawing for it, dated 1558, is kept in the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett (Plate 60) 151. The year marks Bruegel's transition from academic draughtsmanship to genre painting. In rather schoolmasterly fashion this work pillories an aberration from a standpoint of superior enlightenment. The gold-maker's greed and obsession are tellingly satirized, the home and its management going to wrack and ruin. One can almost smell the stench and acrid vapours in the slovenly kitchen. The tragicomedy of the scene is rendered with insight into human foibles. Zealous sermonizing was more and more giving way to tolerant humour in the march toward the ethical neutrality of genre painting.

There are signed and dated paintings for the period from 1557 to 1569. I have usually been content to select a few characteristic examples, but in Bruegel's case this would scarcely be satisfactory. One feels the need for showing everything he did that has been preserved, as well as a desire to unearth what has been lost. One also comes to regret that an untimely death kept this master from unfolding the full scope of his vision. Our aim must be a 'Collected Works,' as in the case of a poet.

A few paintings that lack dates—or at least unequivocal dates—are readily fitted into the chronological sequence of the dated pictures. Only a few resist such classification and may date from the period before 1557. Among these problem pictures that can be dated only with difficulty, I would include the following, some of them not universally acknowledged to be by Bruegel:

*Cutting for Stone*, from the von Gerhardt collection in Budapest (1, Plate 1), now on the art market in that city. It is signed *P. Bruegel 1556*—without the h, contrary to the rule. Jerome Bosch already painted such a humorous allegory, a spare composition with only a few figures. By comparison the Bruegel picture seems coarse and brutal with its cumulation of operations in the village barbershop. The patients resist, strike out in all directions, have to be tied down. The composition is strikingly similar to that of a drawing of 1557, *The Ass in the School Room*<sup>2</sup>, which is almost certainly by Bruegel and is consistent with the date. Possibly the rather crudely done panel in Budapest is a copy of an earlier version by Bruegel.

*Christ Driving the Money-Changers from the Temple*, Copenhagen Museum (3, Plate 3). This work too paraphrases an idea of Bosch. Neither signed nor dated, the painting may have been done about 1556. The many loosely scattered figures stand out as bright patches against a dark background that has grown still darker with age. There is a wide range of postures, people ducking and bridleing, tumbling and hurrying, and of facial expressions as well, all exemplifying Bruegel's whimsical insight into human nature.

*The Archangel Michael* (6, Plate 5). Authoritative connoisseurs have claimed this panel for Bruegel, and it fits in well with the early landscapes, although the posture of the main figure seems curiously feeble. In grouping this work with those done around 1557, I retain certain reservations.

2. In the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett 161.



*The Gift of St. Martin*, a fragment in the Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, water colour on canvas (8, Plate 7). The authenticity of this work has recently been called into question by G. Glück. The full composition is known from an engraving by Guérard. The saint, shown as a youthful knight mounted on a horse, seeks to escape a throng of beggars, fighting savagely for a share of the wine he has distributed, felons and madmen struggling to survive. Their limited mental powers and uninhibited brutishness are expressed in their round polls and staring eyes. The medium employed has drained the tints of the luminosity characteristics of panel paintings, and in consequence they look faded and a bit defective. I am reluctant to venture a date, since the variant technique and poor state of the work leave a comparison with others with only limited value. I do think, however, that this is an original work. One has to take note only of the sinewy tension in the hindlegs of the upwards-striding horse to discard any notion that this is a copy.

*The Adoration of the Magi*, Brussels museum (2, Plate 2). This work too is painted in water colours on canvas, but it is in an even poorer state of preservation than the fragment in Vienna. It is a composition excessively crowded with figures, and there are several copies of it. The figures are tall, lean and of a wooden stiffness. A number of features argue for a very early date, around 1555—the very high horizon, the poor spatial development, the arrangement reminiscent of tapestry. Painted fabric was popular as a less expensive substitute for the precious pictorial weavings, whose stylistic conventions they tended to follow.

*Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, Brussels museum (10, Plate 10), painted on canvas, but apparently in oils. Sophisticated connoisseurs regard this as an early Bruegel, but I am by no means convinced that such a dating is justified. The unusual technique makes classification difficult, to say nothing of the less than perfect state of preservation. The mythological incident has been boldly translated into a contemporary locale. The peasant ploughing by the seaside, shown large in the foreground, is quite unaware of the heroic event. The sun rises as it always does and life down below on earth goes its wonted way, firm and secure, while barely visible in the distance the audacious attempt to defy the laws of nature fails wretchedly. In Bruegel's eyes, man—be he even a hero of mythology—is small and helpless before the forces of nature. The light of the sun is what triumphs in the end. The picture was conceived by a painter, in the narrower sense of the term, and this impression inclines me to posit a relatively late date. It is true, however, that the dainty waves bear a similarity to the *View of Naples*.

*Twelve Proverbs*, composed in medallion form, Mayer van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp (9, Plates 8, 9), indistinctly dated 1558 and signed *Bruegel* in capital letters. Script and spelling of the name are at odds with the date; but that alone does not justify Glück's rejection of this work, put together at a later date from 12 of the master's separate tondos. To my mind the pointed visualizations, together with the spare and self-assured yet at the same time flexible draughtsmanship, seem wholly admirable. I adhere to Bruegel's authorship, but am inclined to assume a date from the master's late period. As we shall be able to see, it was only with time that Bruegel learned the wisdom that brevity is the soul of wit.

Of the pictures named, three seem to me to tell us a bit about the roots of Bruegel's art. *Cutting for Stone* (1, Plate 1) does so only in terms of its composi-

tion, *The Adoration of the Magi* (2, Plate 2) in its awkwardly planar approach, and lastly the *Money-Changers* (3, Plate 3), in which the master at one and the same time imitates and outdistances his great predecessor Bosch.

The sequence of paintings of generally acknowledged authenticity begins with *The Fight between Carnival and Lent*, in Vienna, dated 1559 and signed *Bruegel* (11, Plates 12, 13), the style used regularly from that date onwards. It is a traditional theme that had also served Bosch. Bruegel projected it in realistic genre terms as the colourful hurly-burly of a Netherlandish marketplace. At this stage of his development, he was not overly concerned with maintaining unity of place and time. In his urge to convey a picture rich in contrast and drama, he crowded the noisy merriment and secular entertainments of Mardi gras close to the gloomy and devout penitence of Lent. To the fore we see a burlesque duel between a lean old woman and a fat man bestriding a barrel. On the left there is a noisy tumult and brazen tomfoolery, on the right pious church-goers, beggars, cripples, fish-wives. The entire populace seems to be out and about. The horizon is placed high, to make the crowds more visible. Despite the consistent use of perspective and recession in scale, the overall effect is rather like that of a broadsheet. The air is clear, the daylight diffuse and local colour extends to the farthest depths. The painting marks the beginning of Bruegel's characteristic pictorial genius—irrepressible creative resourcefulness, a penchant for providing the variety and entertainment of a country fair, an urge to capture the life of man in all its nuances. The composition has neither a focal point nor any dividing lines but extends at an even density in all directions. This is again characteristic of the way Bruegel felt about people. For him all were equally 'photogenic', whether beggar or smug burgess, child or termagant. Everyone was part of the show. His crowds constitute a democracy rather than a herd, a throng in which everyone does his own thing, in keeping with age, calling, station or whim, paying little heed to his fellow. Everyone moves in his own way, but the whole is uniformly permeated with the throbbing rhythm of life. Tumult and confusion are moderated by the varying tints of the ground that extends over almost the entire picture area, delicate and shifting nuances that begin with a rather dark brown to the fore, take on a tinge of green in the middleground and end up with a cool grey in the background. Against this ground the figures stand out in their local colour, sometimes bright and then again dark. Brown appears in many gradations, as do blue and red areas with black margins. The overall effect is that of a colourful kaleidoscope that nevertheless always remains harmonious, since the voices are all pitched at the same level, with the result that none rises shrilly above the others.

What took Bruegel's fancy was popular speech and folk wisdom as expressed in proverbs. He was fond of depicting parables from everyday life with brush and pen, observations of foolish behaviour and fruitless endeavour. He had a preference for robust absurdity, for entertaining his audience by picturing for them the ludicrous conduct of some of their contemporaries. An obvious pictorial form for proverbs was to show them in series, as equivalent links in a chain, not unlike a primer. The master did indeed create sequences of engraved charades rather like the painted tondos in the Mayer van den Bergh museum. On one occasion, the large painting in the Berlin museum (12, Plates 14, 15), he accepted the daunting

challenge of accommodating no fewer than 100 proverbs within a single frame! The very audacity of the project stimulated his imagination, but whatever confusion inevitably resulted merely enhanced the sense of mystery. No underlying cohesive fabric is made plain—by the insertion of an allegorical central figure, for example. Every proverb stands on its own, everyone is his own fool. One feels almost as though the roof had been lifted from a madhouse of many cells. The stage has been slyly set and furnished—we look into houses, through windows, on roofs, and everywhere the eye encounters charade. A street leads to the sea in the distance, providing locales for tableaux of many kinds. The whole picture must be read line by line, so to speak, slowly and haltingly, for meanings are not always immediately manifest. Nevertheless, the composition is held together by the unity of space. We almost feel as though we have entered a town in the grip of a sudden epidemic of folly. The complex architecture with its tower, dungeon, pillory, vaults, shops, bays and chapel plays its part in this spectacle of confusion and paradox. W. Fraenger has studied the iconography of this painting exhaustively, giving us profound and masterly explanations<sup>3</sup>. He cites a curious passage from Rabelais as a parallel<sup>4</sup>. This is not to suggest a direct connection between writer and painter, but they would seem to have drunk at the same well, symbolic popular speech; and both shared the proclivity of their time for seeing the funny side of human foibles and holding them up to laughter.

The composition is, of course, adapted to the special challenge it posed, but it corresponds in such high degree with the carnival picture in Vienna that we are justified in assuming approximately the same time of origin for both panels. The date in the Berlin picture is a bit less than distinct. The master seems to have changed 1559 to 1560. The close-knit texture, ready wit and brushwork with its draughtsmanlike black contours are characteristic of this phase, as is the master's imagination, bursting with realism.

What Bruegel did about the time of 1560 was to expand the frontiers of painting. No such painting as *Children's Games* (13, Plates 16, 17)—in Vienna, dated 1560—was ever done before or after, not before, because the courage and freedom to see clearly and insight into the mind of the child were lacking; and not after, because this encyclopaedic enumeration, this dense network of many figures and groups set in a realistic area, would have been considered unnatural, quite apart from the fact that stolid economic considerations would have kept 17th century genre painters from practising such mad profligacy. Teniers let a few meagre themes efficiently serve him for a hundred pictures, while Bruegel used a hundred themes in a single picture.

The figures are arranged in chains that run diagonally, following the main features of the buildings, shown in perspective. The sense of unity with which this infinite variety of action is imbued stems from man's innate play instinct. This is a town of children. No grown-up is to be seen, not a single teacher or educator. What we have here is an apotheosis of childhood, just as the Berlin *Proverbs* panel may be called an apotheosis of folly. The first impression is one of smiling tolerance of all this innocent and haphazard bustle, of sentimental memories of paradise lost; but beyond that the games of these droll and clumsy creatures appear as expressions of a drive that is neither guided nor restrained by any purpose, considera-

3. W. Fraenger, *Der Bauern-Bruegel ...* Zürich, 1923.

4. *Pantagruel*, Book 5 (1564).

tion or coercion. Bruegel's instinctive response to mankind was that children were more human than adults, peasants more than townsmen.

Not always did the master choose themes wholly in keeping with his fancy. Around 1562, a year from which much has come down to us, he addressed himself to biblical and heroic projects, and not infrequently echoes of Jerome Bosch are heard. The *Fall of the Rebel Angels* in the Brussels museum (14, Plates 18, 19) is unmistakably dated 1562, as is the small painting *Two Monkeys* in Berlin (15, Plate 22), while the *Triumph of Death*, in the Prado (18, Plates 24, 25), which bears no date, seems to have been done about this time, as does the *Mad Meg* in the Mayer van den Bergh Museum at Antwerp (16, Plates 20, 21), a panel the date on which has been read sometimes as 1562 and again as 1564. In the small painting, *The Suicide of Saul* (17, Plate 23), the date cannot be clearly discerned.

What is disconcerting in the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (14, Plates 18, 19) is the discrepancy between above and below. Below, fish- and newtlike demons, conceived in the spirit of Bosch, but depicted with scientific realism: and above, the lean, stiff, wooden angels, who seem idealized wraiths distantly related to the Gothic tradition, while the demons are reminiscent of a feeming aquarium. The poisonous vermin, the repulsive melée of limbs in fruitless struggle—these are convincingly shown, while the triumphant divine power hurling the disgusting riffraff into hell never becomes credible.

The *Two Monkeys* in Berlin (15, Plate 22) is small in format but surprisingly large in effect. It depicts two chained simians that stand out warm and brown against a bright background. The view passes through an open vault to the River Schelde and the distant Antwerp skyline. The striking originality and immediacy of the painting are good enough on their own, but the deeper meaning, possibly a proverb, remains hidden. None who knows the art of Bruegel can doubt his ability to capture the specific character, demeanour and movements of any animal. He always had an eye for the creature element, for the area where the human impinges on the animal. Monkeys, so closely related to man, were bound to enlist his special interest.

*The Suicide of Saul*, in Vienna (17, Plate 23), is likewise a small panel, but unlike the monkey picture, which looks as though it had been improvised, this one is finished in minute detail. The king is shown falling on his sword, on a high rocky ledge, remote from the massed horsemen. It is a picture recording an event, and the chronicler seems more concerned with the tactics than the actual fighting. He envisages the battle in terms of the conformation of the terrain that governs the movements of the troops and thus the issue. The vagaries of the ground and the vegetation are thoroughly explored. In terms of colour, the shrouded chiaroscuro of the mounted ranks, with highlights flashing from the cuirasses and lances, stands against the cold bluish green of the evergreens and the grey of the rocks. In its subtle and almost fussy brushwork, reminiscent of Bruegel's imitator Lucas van Valckenborch, it stands alone. It is as hard to assign to the year 1562 as to any other.

The painting van Mander mentions under the title of *Dulle Griet* ('Mad Meg') (16, Plates 20, 21) has had an adventurous career, travelling to Sweden, presumably by way of Prague, then being auctioned in Cologne and winding up in the Mayer van den Bergh Museum in Antwerp. It is a picture in which represen-

tations of traditional elements of hell are underlined with a strong admixture of demoniac humour. The termagant who fears not even the devil and strides triumphantly through hell is a theme that turns up in many variations in the robust folk idiom. It was a theme rather closer to Bruegel's secular spirit than that of the fall of the angels. Fear of hell invisible has given way to awe of the all too visible malevolent shrew. Van Mander had heard of this picture and talks rather vaguely of *de dullen Griet, die een roof voor de helle doet*. In the Brussels picture the messengers from heaven struggle feebly against the evil spirits, but the down-to earth women in the Antwerp panel carry all before them, under the leadership of Mad Meg. Here is no virtue vanquishing vice but rather human vitality scattering the monstrous minions of superstition. The outlandish demons are depicted in great detail, but they have been pushed into the defensive and the maw of hell looks anxious rather than menacing.

The ideas elicited by this volcanic painting should on no account be taken for the painter's intention. One mark of genius is that it transcends its own goal.

Sword in hand, carrying both money bag and kitchen gear, the rapacious virago, outdeviling the devil, strides out blindly through the desolate area, full of fire, populated by repulsive monsters. Two worlds, shining eerily in reflected firelight, clash in a vision of grandeur.

In the painting in Madrid, titled *The Triumph of Death* (18, Plates 24, 25), Bruegel rises beyond hackle-raising histrionics to the level of apocalyptic terror. Tragedy is shown cheek by jowl with tragicomedy and spectacle. A painter who so deeply immersed himself in life was bound to understand the awfulness of death all the more profoundly. Life is shown to be tenacious, never to give up without a struggle. The vast field holds many champions, exemplifying the ubiquity for death. An army draws near, representing inescapable, inexorable fate. In place of a single hero, we have the multitude, the crowd as the wielder of power. In the political sense, this may signify democracy, but from the aesthetic point of view it exemplifies the painter's two-dimensional approach. Mankind, beset on every side by skeleton men, crowds a desolate battlefield of sere brown soil where nothing flourishes, full of gallows and wheels looming from poles, full of the smell of blood and corpses. The assault comes from the left, and escape is barred by a line of skeletons on the right, holding huge shields set on the ground. Death darts about the encircled crowd, striking, stabbing, strangling. A few mercenaries, disturbed at their meals and games, reach for their swords. At the extreme right, a pair of lovers have not yet become aware of the peril. No manner of dying seems to have been neglected, no means of devastation, no form of suffering, no death throes. Only one thing is missing; Christian death, the consoling priest, faith in immortality. Apart from a chapel with mourners, far in the distance, there is nought but hopeless destruction hammered home a hundred times over.

Bruegel's compositions were always dependent on the particular theme in hand. After 1563, however, he did measurably bridle the flow of his imagination. He proceeded with greater economy, at the same time freeing himself of the stylistic laws of graphic illustration. It is as though a chessboard on which all the squares are occupied gradually assumes a more open character. The number of men lessens, king and queen become more prominent, subordination supplants coordi-

nation. The picture plane is treated more like a pictorial space. Some elements come to the fore, others retreat into the distance, and filling the areas evenly in between no longer seems all that urgent. The notion that 'nature abhors a vacuum' seems a thing of the past.

Bruegel, however, did not stick to a single approach. On each occasion his nimble mind found an expression appropriate to the pictorial idea in point.

In the *Tower of Babel* in Vienna (19, Plate 26), dated 1563, the whole structure is thought out with the greatest care. In presumptuous bulk man's handiwork rises to flout nature, a monument to arrogant aspiration. It is not really a tower but rather a massive cone, as wide as it is high. Despite its fanciful dimensions, it is represented with such solid verisimilitude that we are moved to ponder purpose and utility of this wonder of the world, especially since the transport of building materials and the working methods are shown with such expertise. A vast folly the tower may be, but it is a folly dreamed up by an architect. Rising on a circular base and taking advantage of natural rock formations, it is composed of a succession of set-backs. The location is by the seashore, where ships bring on the building materials. It is all a vast waste of planning and labour. A large town stretches out on the plain to the rear. To the fore a king parades proudly, overseeing the execution of his design and accepting the salutes of his stone-masons.

Van Mander speaks of two tower pictures, a larger one and a smaller one, in the emperor's possession. A second panel, much smaller than that in Vienna and unsigned but manifestly by the master's hand, has indeed recently turned up on the Paris market, whence it has gone to the van Beuningen collection (20, Plate 27). In it, the basic pictorial idea is richly varied: and in keeping with the tighter format, the painting is executed with greater precision, almost in the style of a miniature. The tower is firmly and securely planted in the ground and rears up into the clouds, a symbol of the fusion of dream and reality.

A *Procession to Calvary* (25, Plates 32, 33), dated 1564, harks back in approach to the Brunswick Monogrammatist and Pieter Aertsen. Indeed, the iconographical tradition may be traced back even farther, to Jan van Eyck<sup>5</sup>. It shows the Saviour's last road through a throng carrying some features of genre. Traditional the composition may have been, but it was after Bruegel's heart. Here were the common people, moving about on a vast field. The entire populace of the town is poured out across the plain, scattered and disorderly, licking its chops in anticipation of witnessing the execution. There is no emphasis on a dramatic central group of the suffering Saviour with the wicked executioners and their harsh commander. What dominates the picture is the dull-witted crowd, baleful in its effect, a broad stream of meanness in which Christ appears to drift, indeed, almost to have drowned. Viewed from a high vantage point, the throng, punctuated with the bright red coats of the mounted soldiers, offers a picturesque spectacle.

To the fore, on a hillock, in sharp contrast to the witless common herd impelled by instinct, are the chosen, the faithful, the mourners, belonging to another world—a world, by the way, with which Bruegel was not familiar. The relatively large figures of St. John and the women are much as in the conventional religious paintings, both in type and dress. Their unworldly helplessness contrasts with the bitter reality of mob rule.

5. Cf. Volume I, pp. 70f.

Bruegel evidently had in mind the season of the Crucifixion. The overall impression left by the picture is determined by a sense of unsettled early spring weather. There has been a heavy rain. Puddles are on the ground. The air is of vitreous clarity, with local colour standing out sharply in moist glitter. A driving wind gives a tingling intimation of impending disaster.

Bruegel had a deep feeling for the connection of man on earth with his home. He transcended the dividing lines among different genres of painting. When it came to picturing man's existence and destiny as depending on the life of nature, a wonderfully apt framework offered itself to him; the months. An entire sequence of 12 paintings had been finished by 1566—it is already mentioned in an inventory of 21st February 1566<sup>6</sup>. On some of the surviving panels the date 1565 may be discerned. Cycles of the months were known in 15th century book illumination. At an early stage, advantage was taken of the occasion to depict work on the land in genre terms and, by astrological doctrine, man's temperament, character and pursuit were linked with the seasons. In Bruegel's hands, the subject was pervaded with enlightened knowledge of natural history. What governed rustic life in its annual orbit was not so much the starry constellations, but rather the changing weather and climate from month to month. Bruegel got to the heart of the rhythms of time, showing in each picture the state of land and air, as well as of the people living on the land and off the land. The countryman was held fast in the course and swing of light and temperature, chained to the work demanded of the season.

We have five panels from this sequence, three of them in Vienna.

*The Gloomy Day* (26, Plate 34) pictures the seething tension just before nature's awaking, the birth throes of the vegetation. Branches of bare trees are being pruned beneath a leaden sky. There is a sense of burgeoning life, of sap rising, of impending resurrection, of impatience and expectation peculiar to March or April.

*The Hunters in the Snow* (30, Plate 38) shows the countryside frozen beneath its covering, with the dark silhouettes of the men, striding on with difficulty. The month depicted must be December or January. This is another picture in Vienna.

*Hay Making* (27, Plate 35) shows peasants on their brisk way to work in fields at the height of summer. This painting, in the possession of Prince Lobkowitz at Raudnitz Castle, probably depicts June.

*The Corn Harvest* (28, Plate 36) shows men and women exhausted from hard work and the burning sun. This painting, in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, represents July.

*The Return of the Herd* (29, Plate 37), depicting an autumn month, is also in Vienna. The landscape is not unlike the early engravings, with a river course and oblique features abutting at acute angles. Bare trees beneath an overcast sky, with the threat of a storm in the air, the countryside yellow-brown dipped in a pale light, the distances in sharp blues. The horse and the cows to the fore are little more than contours, with little attempt at depth. Restless, they are in a hurry to gain shelter ere the storm breaks. They are shown relatively large, yet subordinated to the total effect.

An epic, of dynamic contrast, this sequence, of the everlasting verities, of the unity of man and the land. How narrow and limited, how inert and somnolent

6. J. Denucé, 'De Antwerpsche "Konstkamers". Inventarissen van Kunstverzamelingen te Antwerpen in de 16e en 17e eeuwen', in *Bronnen voor de Geschiedenis van de Vlaamse Kunst*. II, Antwerp, 1932, p. 5.

the whole 17th century Netherlandish school of landscape painting looks beside Bruegel's account!

The grisaille painting of the *Death of the Virgin* (23, Plate 29), in the collection Lord Lee of Fareham at Richmond Park, was, exceptionally, intended as the model for an engraving. It is signed, but the date is illegible. The number of male mourners crowding about the bed of the dying Virgin is conspicuously enlarged. The mood is set by a mysterious air of chiaroscuro, with a few of the heads highlighted by illumination from several sources. The lacklustre monochrome became a means for expressing the grief and sorrow of the mourners, as well as the ascetic and conventicular character of the assemblage of the faithful.

An *Adoration of the Magi* in the National Gallery, London (24, Plate 30), dated 1564, is made up of few, relatively large figures, forming a single wall, so to speak. The picture has little depth and makes its obeisance to iconographical tradition—it may, exceptionally, have been an altarpiece painted on commission. All Bruegel seems to have been concerned with is mood and facial expression. The soldiers, not usually given to sentimentality, look embarrassed and stupefied, concerned lest they disturb the holy calm. A young man whispers into an oldster's ear.

*Two Peasants Tying up a Bundle of Twigs*, in the possession of Prince Regent Paul of Yugoslavia (21, Plate 28), must have been painted about this time. No doubt it is intended to illustrate a proverb or parable. The painting is spirited and vigorous, and the expression on the faces, a mixture of peasant oafishness and cunning, testifies to the invention as well as the execution being Bruegel's.

In time, the master began to moderate his penchant for satirical story-telling, and his compositions grew simpler and less turbulent. In fact, he appears more and more like a precursor of the 17th century school of landscape and genre painting. His overwhelming loquacity ceased. The straightforward little *Winter Landscape with Skaters* (31, Plate 39), signed and dated 1565 and copied innumerable times, pointed the way followed by Avercamp, Esaias van de Velde and Aart van der Neer.

*The Wedding Dance in the Open Air*, at Detroit (34, Plate 42), dated 1566, almost seems to forecast Rubens's Bacchanals, with its dense throng, chains of square-dancers and rhythmic sway. The horizon lies high and the view is consistently from above, with the result that the figures to the fore are foreshortened and look stocky.

*The Sermon of St. John the Baptist* (35, Plate 43), the original panel in Budapest, also dated 1566, is crowded and overloaded—to some extent this is dictated by the subject—but it is carefully graduated in depth and consistently seen from a single point of view.

The Brussels museum was shrewd enough to acquire an original Bruegel panel (36, Plates 44, 45), of which it already possessed a copy, affording opportunity for instructive comparison. The son's version now hangs beside the father's (71, and one may see how faithfully the son copied—but without any sense of tonal gradation, richness of palette and eloquence of line. The original is dated 1566. The scene is *The Numbering at Bethlehem*, prelude to the *Slaughter of the Innocents*, in deepest winter. We see a snow-covered village square, towards eventide. The sun stands pale and red on the horizon, the snow cover is lighter than the sky. There is a



crowd in front of a house, at the open window of which the villagers are required to report. Figures are shown against the white snow in unusual postures, for the most part in isolated groups with nothing in between. The impression one remembers is one of oppressive desolation, of a dim and melancholy winter day, ominous in its intimations, even though wonted life goes on, with its trivial enjoyments and seasonal chores. A pig is slaughtered, kindling is gathered, children disport themselves on the ice. Everyday life with no inkling of danger is something very near the heart of Bruegel's view. The people, faithfully and tenaciously living on from day to day, untouched by the events that constitute history, clinging to custom and habit—they are the essential and enduring element Bruegel favoured.

Conceived along similar lines and probably the pendant to the *Numbering* is the even more dramatic *Slaughter of the Innocents* proper, the putative original of which is in Vienna (37, Plate 46). The locale is much the same, as are the lighting and the relation of the figures in space. In execution, the fluttery line and sallow coloris, this painting lags behind the one in Brussels, leading me to suspect that we may have only a copy of the *Slaughter*.

The master rummaged through the Bible texts for violent and warlike incidents to transpose into his own time, a time that was itself full of threatened disaster. The countryside and the streets of the towns teemed with men in armour and soldiers in red, who terrified peasant and burgess alike.

*The Conversion of St. Paul*, dated 1567, is also in Vienna (38, Plate 47). The setting for the event is a military train, as in the familiar engraving by Lucas van Leyden, but a novel element is that the procession is moving upwards in depth. Horse and foot are climbing a steep defile. To the fore are the stragglers. All the marchers are turning their backs on us. Bruegel seems to be emphasizing that the event is not being staged for our benefit but is a very private thing, and this enhances its spontaneous and transitory character. A few moments earlier the train would not yet have been in view, a few moments later it would be out of sight. From our point of vantage just behind the soldiers, we barely manage to see what is happening. The reclining Paul has slipped from his horse. The why and wherefore—in other words, the essence of the picture—remain hidden, have to be sought or divined. By contrast, the soldiers traversing a mountain path are nearby and in plain view. There has been an accident, the procession has been slowed down, probably on account of the difficulty of the terrain.

The best specimen—in my opinion the original—of the repeatedly copied *Wedding Procession* is in the possession of Mr. Spencer Churchill at Northwick Park (32, Plate 40). It is a very wide panel, and the unusual format permitted the uncluttered and uncrowded presentation of the incident depicted, a procession of a large number of participants in the celebration. The procession runs almost parallel to the picture plane, emerging with only a slight degree of obliquity, at a leisurely pace and in two files, side by side, the women headed by the bride, the men by the bridegroom. They are walking slowly, in time to the music of a bagpipe, most of them displaying the dignity appropriate to the occasion. They are keeping in line, although high spirits, curiosity and a penchant for gossiping slightly upset the order here and there. Bruegel's people walk to church in a way different from their walking to work. In its casual realism, this composition is one

of Bruegel's mature masterpieces. The execution seems to me to be worthy of the master. The countryside with its smoke-veiled village houses breathes a holiday quiet and the long, straight line of the horizon, dominated in the middle by a windmill, serves to emphasize the quiet flow of the procession.

In no other painting by Bruegel is peasant life depicted so peacefully and cosily, without sharp edges and points, free of satire and reservations. It marks just about his farthest point of advance on the road to pure genre.

The following paintings, dated 1567 and 1568, are highly characteristic of Bruegel's late period:

*The Adoration of the Magi in the Snow*, collection of Dr. O. Reinhart, Winterthur (39, Plate 48). The date of 1567 is indistinct. The swirling snow, an intriguing innovation in the original, was usually omitted by the copiers.

*The Land of Cockaigne*, Pinakothek, Munich, dated 1567 (40, Plate 49).

*The Misanthrope*, Naples museum, indistinctly dated 1568 (41, Plate 50).

*The Parable of the Blind*, Naples museum, dated 1568 (42, Plate 51).

*The Peasant and the Birdnester*, Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, dated 1568 (44, Plate 52).

*The Magpie on the Gallow* 181, Darmstadt museum, dated 1568 (45, Plate 53).

*The Cripples*, Louvre, Paris, dated 1568 (43, Plate 51).

These paintings, different as they are, one from another, are distinguished from those done earlier by their simplicity, balance and sense of immediacy. The master was no longer firing a shotgun, but hitting the bull's eye with a rifle. The Naples tondo (41, Plate 50), showing an old man in mourning whose purse is being abstracted, is spare and sharp, like the verso of a medallion. *The Land of Cockaigne* (40, Plate 49), with a tree trunk as the axis and the three loafers grouped around it like the spokes of a wheel, is almost geometrically composed. Bruegel's mastery in organizing his material is displayed admirably in *The Peasant and the Birdnester* (44, Plate 52) and *The Cripples* (43, Plate 51). Bruegel's line had grown more sensitive, while his impetuous brushwork was more relaxed. Contours were no longer outlined as emphatically as before. The deeper meaning of the painting in Darmstadt has not been deciphered. Perhaps the master was merely allegorizing the fleeting nature of all man's pleasures. Despite the looming gallows, the hazy countryside breathes serenity and security.

Two of the paintings in Vienna, *The Wedding Banquet* (46, Plate 54) and the *Peasant Dance* (47, Plate 55), both undated, seem to have been done as pendants and are generally thought to be products of Bruegel's last years. Their realism is of a kind different from the master's other works, for the reason that he chose another point of vantage, at about the level of the peasants' heads, for both space and figures. The viewer is closer to the scene, and the figures to the fore are relatively large, while those to the rear, partly overlapped, are much foreshortened. It is a perspective with which we are familiar, from 17th century genre painting. Let us recall that Bruegel the draughtsman started rather differently, looking at people from a distance and from above, so that depth could be shown as elevation, so to speak. Bruegel, in other words, traversed the road from broadsheet to true picture, from spreadout array to integrated composition with linkages and points of concentration.

This transformation was associated with a shift in psychological approach. Bruegel began with the collection of abundant and internally consistent themes, based on his broad visual experience, which he then crammed into a single frame. He ended with the realization of single pictorial incident. The reality of plain everyday life won an ever greater share among his pictorial themes.

Peasant weddings often preoccupied him. Apart from the open-air dance in Detroit, there are a large number of replicas and versions of this theme. Often episodes that are in fact quite separate in time and place were enthusiastically combined. Virtually everything that appertains to a peasant wedding was to be shown in one lump—the marriage contract, payment of the dowry, pleasures of the table, music, dancing. In one of the Vienna pictures, the feast is taking place in a barn, in the other, the dancing is outdoors. It is quite likely that Bruegel actually witnessed events like these. His epic prodigality gives way to direct observation, pure perception. By stepping up more closely to his people, he enhanced individualization almost to the level of portraiture.

With serene self-assurance, the master shaped the human figure into new grandeur and clarity. If we blank out his colours and his modelling, by way of experiment, we find that all the essentials—like the illusion of space, movement, the relations among the characters—are already provided by his mere contours, aided by overlaps and foreshortening. His colourful palette, with vermilion as the highest note, is as pure and positive in the barn as it is outdoors and perfectly expresses 'Sunday best' in the naïve peasant taste.

A composition that has come down to us in several copies—the original is lost—seems particularly characteristic of Bruegel's ultimate triumph over the notion that 'nature abhors a vacuum.' In *The Faithless Shepherd* (Plate 58), a figure is shown in flight, obliquely to the fore. A desolate plain extends into the distance. This pregnant emptiness suggests the long way the threatened herdsman has traversed, the treeless prairie that granted him neither cover nor other protection. One is reluctant to apply the term 'classic to anything Bruegel did, but this spontaneous, unequivocally eloquent and grandly simply solution does bring to mind that word, so drained of meaning by over use.

One also hesitates to say the last word. Bruegel died in 1569 in the prime of life, aged about 45. His last surviving works show no trace of rigidity or routine or exhaustion of ideas. We stand at his grave with the feeling that his development was abruptly cut short. Trying to peer beyond his death, we seek to envisage whither his path might have led him, had he not been called away prematurely. It is precisely his late works that provide surprises and hold out promise. Bruegel was certainly not among those gifted people who give out their best in the fire of youth. He remained productive by constantly changing, never ceasing to drink in the richness of the visible world, never succumbing to the notion that he had found a definitive art form.

So lacking in principle was he that he seems at times almost a dilettante. He was always guided by the mood that emanated from his subject and drove him into the trackless future. Nowhere does this become clearer than in the *Storm at Sea* in the Vienna museum (48, Plate 56). Bruegel whipped his panel in much the same way as the storm is shown whipping the sea. The brownish, bluish and greenish

tints are brushed on side by side and one above the other. They seem to be fighting, as do the white patches of sails, gulls and jagged surf. A whale and a barrel are adrift in the furious sea. Here again it has been conjectured that a proverb may have provided the theme or the pretext—probably correctly. To our eyes, the eruption that is shaking sky and sea, the chaotic shapes and tints, are so overwhelming that we feel no need for any ulterior meaning. No one prior to Rubens sensed nature's elementary power so profoundly and viewed her doings with such grandeur.

Beyond any question this seascape was done at a late date, even though there are no clues to its time of origin, for example by reference to other signed and dated works.

Among drawings dated 1568, one is noteworthy for its unexpected monumentality. Now preserved in the Hamburg Kunsthalle, it is a carefully made preliminary drawing for an engraving, *Summer*, from a series of the seasons (Plate 61). It shows peasants gathering in the harvest, heavy figures, their heads for the most part hidden, crowding in plastic fulness to the fore. The countryside smiles in diffuse daylight. The heroic pathos in this apotheosis of peasant vigour lies in the muscular bodies and the rhythmic power of their movements. Once again we see just where Bruegel ended up, and we note the degree to which the master's inner eye transformed his relation to people in space. At the outset, his figures were inserted almost like stage props, lost in space; but in time the human figure gained more and more the dominant position in the totality of the picture. Initially, Bruegel's eyes were drawn to the crowd, and only slowly did he shift to the individual. In this *Summer* drawing, the figure of a peasant drinking, in particular, threatens to burst the picture area and approaches the orgiastic ripeness of the baroque, giving an inkling of paths his untimely death kept Bruegel from treading.

# The Character of Pieter Bruegel

Once Bruegel's uniqueness was generally recognized—and it took long enough—historians did their best to categorize him. Much insight and scholarship were employed in explaining the contrast between Bruegel's autochthonous art and the Italianate spirit of such of his contemporaries as Floris, Lombard and van Heemskerck. Attention has often been called to the fact Bruegel appeared at precisely the time when the people of the Netherlands rose against the feudal and clerical rule imposed upon them from without.

Yes, Bruegel too visited Italy, and the effect of his journey is plainly discernible in the mental upheaval he underwent upon crossing the Alps; but it has often been maintained that he remained altogether blind to the art of Italy. Of course there have been those who disagreed. They thought they sensed an echo of the High Renaissance in the tempestuous grandeur of his landscapes. Frits Lugt made a profound study of the relevant works and uncovered a relationship between certain Venetian drawings and compositions by Bruegel<sup>1</sup>.

It should be kept in mind that any Netherlander born around 1525 would have learned about Italian ideas and standards, during his apprenticeship, if not already at home, and even if he were not a student of the academically oriented Pieter Coeck. Bruegel, moreover, was in touch with Jerome Cock even before he set out for Italy, and Cock's brother Mathijs had been in Italy around 1540, there to be influenced by the Venetian way of depicting the countryside. The notion that the art of the South was the be-all and end-all held undisputed sway in the North around 1550. In view of this generally held opinion, to say nothing of the whole atmosphere in which Bruegel grew up, his steadfast rejection of foreign pictorial patterns is rather more remarkable than the Southern links that have been seen in his landscapes—but not, it should be noted in his figures, despite the blandishments of Renaissance figure painting, which exerted such a powerful temptation upon the artists of the North.

Bruegel began as a draughtsman rather than a painter, at least so far as we can see. It seems almost as though he came to painting by the back door. That is why it may have been easier for him to steer free of the prejudices and conventions that dominated the artist's life in his days.

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of works to document the development of Bruegel's style directly, and in consequence his obvious and manifest points of similarity with Jerome Bosch tended to be overestimated. Indeed, this happened even in his lifetime.

Lost works have been actually cited as Bruegel's sources—illustrative and decorative water colours that have perished and of which we know mainly through writings and inventories<sup>2</sup>. It may certainly be said that his subject matter is rooted more deeply in book illumination, in tapestry and in water colour, the substitute for tapestry, than in panel painting. Whatever links may have been ingeniously discovered concern only unimportant aspects. Bruegel was many things, but

1. Pp. 111 ff. of the 1927 *Festschrift* dedicated to me.

2. G. Glück in his work on Bruegel's paintings, Vienna.

above all he was a genius, hence all efforts to demonstrate the roots of his work and his creativeness are doomed to failure. In his book about Velazquez, C. Justi says some valid and memorable things on how to approach a great master, but alas! he has not been heeded. We still tend to look on creative personalities as though they were traditionalists with an unusual zeal to learn and an extraordinary capacity to absorb.

Genius is as visionary in one aspect as it is obstinate in another. It pursues its goals from some inner compulsion, unable to accept influences not in accord with its nature, not apt to speed it on its way. I think it entirely possible that Bruegel applied himself for years in Pieter Coeck's workshop, only to shed what he had learned like a snake-skin. Drinking his pictorial fill directly from life, he was able to banish all traditional art forms from his mind completely.

We pay too little heed to the seclusiveness, indeed, almost blindness of creative people. Their unconscious naïveté gives them the unerring assurance of sleepwalkers. We tend to abstract ideas from the impression left by a work of art, from the way it moves us and excites us, and then we falsely impute those ideas to the artist. Actually, Bruegel was less sophisticated than his exegetes, but their superior in whimsy.

The crucial element is how the creative person stands towards life. It is the unique blend of human qualities that determines the artist's approach, and with it his means, style, compositions, formal idiom, palette. In the engraving that shows him in profile, Bruegel looks wise, friendly and serene. He was a zealous witness to life. His knowledge stemmed from what his eyes saw. He was rich in insights and notions that took on pictorial form. If the term 'imagery' had not yet been in use, it would have had to be invented for him. He was a pioneer without the airs of one, without even being aware of the revolutionary implications of his work. He loved reality without reservation or prejudice and rejoiced over every visible manifestation of vitality. The world looked to him like a kind of clockwork that never needed winding.

Bruegel was not intent upon producing pretty pictures, or even pictures that were decorative or stately. What he wanted to do more than anything else was to keep telling about life down here on earth in all its countless aspects, with all of its zest and turbulence. Bruegel's name is quite worthy of being mentioned in the same breath with Shakespeare's, as an author of comedy and tragicomedy. Early on he was inclined—or perhaps he was persuaded—to hitch the straining wealth of his mind to the service of encyclopaedic allegory, of a kind that suited the puzzle-solving taste of his age.

People in action were what fascinated him—not necessarily people who knew precisely what they were doing and why, but rather people who were acting on impulse and instinct.

Something is always happening in his pictures. Their meaning is never merely situational. His cripples and blind men still stir with vitality, despite handicaps and obstacles.

Bruegel reached the realm of pure genre through his love of spectacle and his predilection for the things of this world. The term 'genre' makes us think of humble everyday life, free of tempestuous fluctuations. Bruegel, however, by

virtue of his temperament, does lend a sense of dramatic excitement to genre. Nothing is too small for him, yet he does not cling to the petty, on the contrary, he places trifles and insignificant details in the context of an all-embracing world view. It is true, of course, that the bright, resounding and even heroic note of his pictorial idiom owes something to the spirit of his time, to the destiny of his oppressed and tormented people who were about to rise to fight for their freedom.

Bruegel never repeated himself—he gloried in the multifariousness of life, its picturesque vitality, the new that had never before been depicted. There are many possible departures from a single standard, many possible curves but only one straight line—hence the wealth of Bruegel's forms and shapes. He never tired of looking for the next adventure.

There has probably never been another master who forewent so completely any idea of using beauty for effect—indeed, the thought never even occurred to him. Graceful and harmonious bodies and faces, architectural symmetry, geometrical ornament—all these were beyond his ken. What rivetted his eye was natural growth with all its fortuitous lumps and unevennesses and roughnesses, the wrinkles and furrows of age, the traces of unremitting labour, the reddish-brown patina of bodies stamped indelibly by hardship. For Bruegel man was quite definitely not created in the image of God. No hero he, no ruler over all he surveyed, but instead a creature bent and bowed, either too fat or too lean.

Neither reticent nor vain, Bruegel cared nothing for dignity and never strove to please. He simply followed his whim and his pleasure, indulged his notions. He kept working away tolerantly and uncomplainingly. Ugliness ceased being ugly, because it was never used to effect a contrast with beauty. It was seen as a general quality of nature, seeming to be indissolubly linked with man's fate. Bruegel transcended the dualism of 'fair' and 'ugly', so zealously cultivated by Quentin Massys, for example, as a visible paradigm of good and evil.

One thing children, animals and fools have in common is that they do not curb their instincts. Bruegel's mind aimed with deep empathy at the purling stream of life that could never be guided into the channels of civilization, reason, social convention or religious discipline; and what he hit upon were not ephemeral elements of his particular age, but the timeless, immutable core of mankind. Children still play today as they did in the 16th century. There is a bit of the animal and the fool in everyone of Bruegel's creatures. His eye went deep enough to discern the child within the man.

Bruegel's surpassing interest was the peasant, whose workday and holiday have been scarcely touched by the march of time. According to van Mander, Bruegel grew up among peasants, but this conclusion is scarcely based on very profound insight, indeed, it is doubtful and even improbable. Bruegel was rather a frequenter of the peasantry, and the more deeply he plunged down into the social strata, the purer and more universal was the core of authentic human behaviour he uncovered, in the peasant way of life, in the tasks and customs of work close to the soil. There was neither pity nor scorn, nor even social criticism in Bruegel's view of the countryman. He took a simple visual pleasure in the spontaneity of unsophisticated people, people who were frugal and at the same time indestructible.

Bruegel fled the confinement of city walls, finding more freedom and scope without, a life that was closer to nature. When he went to the peasants, he avoided anything that might have drawn their attention to the fact that they were being observed. He was fond of capturing the contours of the backs of people. They were, after all, living their own lives, facing their own areas—which, incidentally, enhanced the illusion of depth. They were not lined up behind the footlights, giving a show. There is never a hint in Bruegel's pictures that the people are there to amuse us, move us to pity, infect us with their merriment, invite us to their festivities, elements that occur not infrequently in later Netherlandish genre painting, lending it an obsequious air of playing to the gallery.

If Bruegel did have an overall philosophy of life, it was certainly not based on a carefully worked-out and deliberately adopted credo. We do not know whether, in terms of religious beliefs, he regarded himself as a Catholic, Protestant or Free-thinker; but it does not matter, for the visual experiences he conveys to us are certainly rooted in a naïve paganism. Man only seems to be free, to do as he pleases. Actually, his behaviour is forced upon him, is inexorably governed by circumstance and heritage. He is like a fish caught in the net of his own folly. He follows blind and inexorable laws of nature rather than being dependent on God's grace and judgment.

A sceptic, a fatalist, and in a manner of speaking a pessimist, Bruegel sensed that man's life was always dubious and parlous, poised on razor's edge. Folly and illusion dogged his every step. His petty pleasures were based on ignorance and self-deception. The church, in town as well as country, was part and parcel of tradition, faithfully adhered to, true enough, but it held no sway over the soul, which continued on its sinful and misguided way. In another sense, Bruegel was a valorous and virile optimist, a happy enthusiast who loved life despite all its hardships and vicissitudes, who, in the face of its ever-changing and inexhaustibly colourful spectacle, never had time to give way to pity, contempt or moral judgment.

A man dedicated to vision, Bruegel had no more difficulty in overcoming any ethical conflict between good and evil than that between the fair and the ugly. In a way, he seems to have anticipated ideas and concepts that were formulated only much later—the pantheism of Spinoza, Schopenhauer's World as Will, Darwin's Struggle for Existence.

Bruegel's whimsy stems from his *joie de vivre*, a zest for life in all its manifestations. He smiled on men's follies and foibles—although his sympathy held just a pinch of social and intellectual superiority. It is the spectacle of vitality asserting itself under stress and prevailing that is so refreshing and heartening to the beholder.

Movement is essentially an element denied pictorial art; but of course a master who saw action as the very heart and soul of life was bound to care passionately about the illusion of movement. In movement, time and space are conjoined.

The painters of the Netherlands in the 15th century, however, were intent above all upon the illusion of reality, and this meant arresting objects in space, anchoring them so that they might be carefully and precisely studied. This in turn resulted in varying degrees of pictorial immobility, a kind of lingering pedantry—from which Jerome Bosch did manage to cast loose, which is precisely why he appears



as Bruegel's precursor. The art of the 16th century began to crave movement, and early on, these strivings were manifested in extreme postures and fluttering garments. Later on, the High Renaissance in Italy was found to provide support, and certain types of 'beauty' in movement became codified, principally in terms of contrapposto—walking, running, reaching, flying—to be formally taught by such masters as van Orley, Pieter Coeck, Jan van Hemessen and Frans Floris.

Bruegel on his part, with his unique feeling for the living organism, managed to overcome completely not only the 'frozen' picture, but the more recently established conventions in respect of movement. No two figures in his œuvre can be found to be doing precisely the same thing. They race or limp, totter or strike out, whirl and dance, each one in keeping with his character, age or situation. Domestic or craft chores take the place of mere airs and attitudes, or it may be play, struggle or the tilling of the soil that is brought within the realm of art. When his people are shown still, it is only because they are resting from their labours. Compared with Bruegel, other story-telling painters never manage to achieve much more than *tableaux vivants*.

Tonal modelling did not greatly trouble Bruegel. For one thing, his faces are not often shown close up, but as a rule rather nondescriptly in the distance. For another, he tended to realize the illusion of depth by rapid-fire contours and silhouettes rather than by attempts at three-dimensionality. A tree trunk may actually be cylindrical, but Bruegel may well render it only as a dark stripe. Lighting and placement, the relation of objects to the painter's vantage point—these were decided from case to case, as circumstance dictate. Taking in the scene as a whole, Bruegel conveniently forgot all his detailed knowledge of local colour and form.

Bruegel followed a circuitous route in arriving at genre—by way of drawings, illustrations, satire and charade. The proverb, in particular, became his bridge to everyday life, for it afforded him the occasion to introduce quaint types doing odd things. For the most part, he did not use proverbs proper, but rather humorous parables and locutions from popular speech that throw a sharp light on human folly and blundering. He was expert in eliciting the comic elements in such word pictures, surprising the eyes with what the ears were accustomed to. To cite an example: 'Sitting down between two chairs', implying hesitation, irresoluteness, cowardly avoidance of choosing between two options—with predictably unfortunate results, exemplified by showing some oaf coming into unwontedly hard and sudden contact with the ground between two chairs. It is a classic occasion for primitive gloating, unfailingly laugh-provoking, and its visualization by Bruegel's brush breathes new life into an over used cliché.

Bruegel was the master of a genre we might term the pictorial anecdote. Indeed, his pointed wit left him in lofty solitude, virtually without a rival until Daumier came along.

Early in its general development, landscape painting inclined to meticulous documentation, later on to a dreamy and lyrical tranquillity. What was first venerated was the vastness of the earth, later on its hallowed quiet. Bruegel's countryside, on the other hand, is dramatic, with wind, weather and light changing with the seasons, defying the elements. Arid or fertile, sustaining or perilous, hostile or hospitable, it unfailingly affects its inhabitants. People who viewed nature in this

light were no self-indulgent poets, but rather hunters, peasants, fishermen or mariners to whom weather could mean everything. The expressiveness in Bruegel's paintings lies in the landscape rather than the human countenance. The land is shown slumbering beneath a heavy covering of snow, it is shown mourning, laughing, threatening, suffering under the whiplash of a storm, heralding death and disaster. Living things are subordinated to the locale, which they tend to mimic. Bruegel was a man of the North, and as such he was fond of lingering over the wistfulness of dimly lighted days and the restless ferment of spring.

Bruegel was unable to give shape to any incident, any encounter, without at once visualizing time and place—especially the season and the time of day. He was less mindful of the fact that Christ dwelt on earth 1500 years ago than that he was born in December and crucified at Eastertime. He was little concerned about history. He rarely dressed his figures in any kind of national or idealized costume. Usually they wore the familiar dress of his time and his country, the Low Countries, where they were shown.

Compared with his contemporaries, Bruegel was an improviser. He built his pictures with instinctive assurance, disdaining any scaffolding. There are scarcely any preliminary sketches among the many drawings of his that have come down to us.

Bruegel was an impressionist, a man in a hurry for many reasons, urged on by his visual imagination as well as by his pleasure in simply getting on with things. Besides, anything that moved had to be captured swiftly. Bruegel reached out like a man taking snapshots, actually with an unerring optical memory for contours, for the profile. The secret of his ability lay in the fact that visual experience left deep and ineradicable traces within him.

Study of the nude, knowledge of anatomy, copying ancient statuary or possibly the paintings of Raphael, the engravings of Dürer and Marcantonio—these were the paths trodden in the 16th century, the crutches that were used. But not by Bruegel. He did not proceed from the nude, did not analyze, did not cling to any alien art form. Rather he conceived every pictorial idea in terms of story-telling, while at the same time realizing it as a draughtsman. This approach makes his œuvre seem timeless rather than progressive. Most other works seem tedious by comparison, time-bound despite the craving for originality, frozen despite all effort at drama and pathos. Bruegel displays his unorthodoxy especially in his treatment of the clothed figure. From the 16th century into our own days, fine artists have begun their apprenticeships with the life class. In order to see through the outer covering, one dispensed with it. Since the body, in function and configuration, determined the fall of drapery, it was deemed urgent and indispensable to acquire an intimate knowledge of the organism in its cocoon. Only Bruegel took in the appearance as a whole, without dissecting it pedantically. He rejoiced in its many manifestations. There was but one body, but many forms of dress and countless silhouettes adopted by the moving body in its swathings.

Bruegel was not concerned with artfully arranged drapery, ornamental folds, the billowing, airy dress of the South that revealed as it clung, but rather with the multilayered, warm clothing of the North that formed a shell about the body rather than a veil. Bruegel's vision may have been impressionistic, but his interest

in the subject matter was almost as great, as was his endeavour to elucidate events that were often not at all easy to follow. He constructed his Tower of Babel with the acumen of an architect, outdoing himself in precision and wealth of detail. When anything was truly at rest, Bruegel could contemplate it quietly. When confronted with buildings, he was accurate almost to a fault, as may be seen in several drawings dated 1562. At times his winged line merely outlines the figures to the fore, while the immobile or slowly moving background is carefully elaborated. This combination of his inherited Netherlandish visual acuity with an all-embracing perspective yielded him the maximum of painterly effect attainable by a draughtsman; for Bruegel always remained a draughtsman, not only because he began by working on paper, but also because his respect of reality would not tolerate any blurring or blurring or smudging. Chiaroscuro was all right, but only as indicated by the situation, for example upon looking into a dim vault, a gloomy church interior—never as an effect on its own. As a creative story-teller, Bruegel did, of course, employ whatever means were available to a painter, but he never relinquished the clarifying, demarcating, pointing line, a logical outgrowth of his active nature, quite unlike the use of restful colour areas. Bruegel's vision was anti-plastic. He was a painter who took down every thing and every figure in relation to overall space. He was a painter also in his fondness for tracing divided and ramified structures in their unpredictable confusion.

Bruegel was a realist. It sounds banal and will be disputed by the culture snobs who are always on the look-out for cheap opportunities to offer something new by inverting a view that has come to be accepted. The archetypal, elementary, acerbic freshness that issues from Bruegel's work stems directly from nature, which he disdained to regard through the glass of academic doctrine, time-bound convention, tradition or ethical and aesthetic prejudice. He makes us feel that we are looking at the world for the first time, and soon we come to believe that we must have always seen it in this light. All our senses are involved in our taking it in. We seem to smell the soil, to feel the pressure of the air, to sense the breath of the wind. Bruegel infused his own vitality into his pictures, and his realism is that of neither the painter of still lifes nor the portraitist. He kept his distance, maintained a sense of perspective, was reluctant to come too close, to distinguish individual traits. He was a story-teller, a dramatizer, rather than a painstaking recorder. He was less interested in the things themselves than in their interrelations, their interaction, their context.

Although Bruegel's active period was comparatively short, the line of his development may be delineated with considerable clarity—indeed, it should already have come into focus for the reader when I described Bruegel's paintings in chronological order. Early on he juxtaposed motives of equivalent weight. Later on he depicted massive consolidated groups, pressed and buffeted more deeply into his picture space; or he would fit a few figures together, in the shape of a star in *The Land of Cockaigne* (40, Plate 49), in an artfully linked chain in *The Parable of the Blind* at Naples (42, Plate 51).

His brushwork changed like the weather in April. When one seeks to trace its development, one ought to remember what C. Justi once wrote: Why tease out an evolutionary element from every single trait in a work of art, when the ex-

planation lies so obviously in object and circumstance? Format and scale determine the brushwork, and even more the painter's mood, elicited by the pictorial theme in hand.

Bruegel never aged. Nowhere does one sense any habituation, manner, formula. Everywhere there is whimsy, audacity, spontaneity. There are always new visions to set the pace and rhythm of the brushwork. Sometimes Bruegel painted with broad, heedless, vehement strokes. At other times he was painstakingly precise. Just as a composer adapts melody and key to the text, from case to case, so Bruegel adapted drawing and coloration to the pictorial text he had himself conceived. His palette, particularly, expresses the mood. It may be almost garishly primitive, radiating festive joy; or again, it may be almost monochrome, with wide brown tonal areas; or delicate and selective; or fiery like a fanfare of trumpets. It is the temper of the picture—or even part of a picture—that determines the spectrum. Bruegel's forms speak, his colours sing. For that reason, by the way, black-and-white reproductions can serve as little more than a primer.

Bruegel usually painted in a water colour manner, open, streaky, with fluid pigments, giving a loose, porous and sometimes rough surface appropriate to conveying an impression of worn and weathered materials, homespun fabrics, fissured skin, split tree bark and patchy soil that often looks as though the colours had been sprayed on. The tints, applied by the master lightly, spontaneously and unevenly, do not entirely cover the luminous ground, and he seldom used more than one coat. Apart from the illusion of texture, this invests his panels with a translucent gleam and moist freshness. The paintings that are in the best state of preservation are reminiscent of grainy, glazed stoneware.

Around 1559, when Bruegel was painting the carnival picture, now in Vienna, and the proverbs, in Berlin, his temperament was volatile, his brushwork marked by youthful impatience, with vigorous black contours and steel blue the dominant tint, the *matière* heavy, although sparkling and pervaded with light; but such urgency and tension were soon resolved. Around 1563 and 1564, when *The Tower of Babel* (19, Plate 26) and *The Procession to Calvary* (25, Plate 31) were being done, the execution leaves a rather more careful and subtle impression, with a lighter and milder palette. The drawn contours had vanished. Among all the master's works, the *Procession* is particularly noteworthy for its fine draughtsmanship and abundantly flourishing local colour. Still later, around 1565, when the month pictures were painted, the brushwork gained a broomlike sweep. His farsighted and organizing approach then is quite distinct from the kind of scanning he did when he originally made the transition from drawing to painting.

His initially rather cursory draughtsmanship gained in suppleness. Accuracy of form never seems to have been a cherished goal in itself—it was always no more than a means to an end and what alone mattered was the full expression of a pictorial idea. Bruegel the draughtsman was not greatly interested that a hand had five fingers nor in how these fingers were really constructed. What concerned him was the function of the limbs in the overall pictorial context. Petty critics who remain untouched by this total impression may wonder—in the case of the month pictures, above all—that indifferent and negligent detail may be found side by side with delicacy and subtlety. Bruegel's spatial depth is convincing and the harmony

of the picture plane is rarely disrupted by overblown three-dimensionality in the foreground. His pictorial world is shut off from us, so to speak, as though a wide moat were keeping cruelty and obscenity from coming too close—they seem to be softened and in some measure spiritualized. It is true, of course, that Bruegel's reality is nevertheless naked and unvarnished, but it does have an expanded and visionary quality. Bruegel's eye was constructed or accommodated in such a way that distance is seen in greater sharpness and detail than nearness.

Bruegel did not paint for the people, least of all for the peasants, but this does not mean that the people took no pleasure in his pictures, quite the contrary, as the countless copies and imitations of his works testify. Engravings were actually published in only small editions, and their inscriptions indicate that they addressed themselves to a relatively small educated class. Bruegel's paintings were coveted by the rich and powerful. The fact that the Vienna museum is far richer in Bruegel's than any other is due to the passionate collecting zeal of the Hapsburgs. Bruegel projected an enticing world of contrast that served to release suppressed instincts. Indeed, a sharper contrast is scarcely imaginable than that between the chilly diplomatic self-discipline of Spanish court ceremonial and the relaxation and indulgence of real life.

Fatigued and oppressed by the constraint of dutiful dignity, lonely and bored, the exalted lords sought variety and amusement by taking part as aloof spectators in these droll, quaint and rude manifestations of uninhibited sensuality. No doubt their sense of superiority carried an admixture of secret envy.

A popular artist even during his own 16th century, Bruegel had become famous by 1600. Van Mander sang his praises and more than once cited him as a model in his paean on the theory of art. But Bruegel's fame was based on something short of understanding. Van Mander lauded him in the same breath with his more orthodox contemporaries. Not by a single word does the biographer indicate that he understood the unique nature of Bruegel, the lone wolf—even though later on in his own eclectic work he favoured realism in the spirit of Bruegel, as Elisabeth Valentiner has shown in her informative book<sup>3</sup>.

In the 18th century the name of Bruegel faded into obscurity. French taste embarked on its triumphant reign. Such ideas of Bruegel as survived pictured him as a coarse jokester whose productions flew in the face of the laws of aesthetics and merited no room beside the classic works of ages past. In consequence of this misjudgment, Bruegel went unrepresented in the great museums built on 18th century royal collections or established and expanded in the 19th century—until recently, that is. Berlin acquired two paintings only a short time ago and the National Gallery one, while the Louvre received another as a bequest.

Prior to 1890 the literature on Bruegel is exceedingly sparse. He was rediscovered at about the same time as El Greco and Matthias Grünewald, and recent decades have witnessed a rising wave of admiration and enthusiasm.

As usual, art historians have been outdoing one another as apostles of the new deity, making him into a kind of cult figure into whose work, they read the most outlandish interpretations. Even so, the fervour of their efforts and the oracular tone of their disquisitions testify to the profound impact of this creative genius.

Intent upon fitting the master into their boldly erected Tower of Babel of

3. *Karel van Mander als Maler*, Heitz, Strasbourg, 1930.

historical development, historians do their best to dress the stone appropriately. Bruegel's career is honoured as a stretch on the great road that leads from van Eyck to Rubens. In this process some traits in the master's character are over-emphasized, while others are overlooked or deliberately ignored. His work has been scoured for signs that show him to be in harmony with his contemporaries.

One can only say emphatically that Bruegel was the very antithesis of the Renaissance artist. There is a popular theory that the artist takes the torch from a predecessor and hands it on to a successor. In this case, as in many others, this is sheer illusion. Bruegel's immediate successors mean very little. His son Pieter was an uninspired copyist. His other and more gifted son, Jan, stuck to his modest speciality.

Rubens began his career with the indifferent painter Otto Venius, who in turn traced his artistic ancestry to the Antwerp eclectics. The road to Rubens, like that to Rembrandt, runs in obscurity. It is true that certain 17th century Netherlandish artists did work that is in one way or another reminiscent of Bruegel's, men like Rubens, Frans Hals, Brouwer, Jan Steen, but no chain of cause and effect can be forged. The heart of Bruegel's art was not something that could be learned, conveyed or inherited.

# The Catalogue

## THE PAINTINGS BY PIETER BRUEGEL IN THE SUPPOSED ORDER OF THEIR CREATION

G. Glück has reproduced in his volume *Bruegels Gemälde*, (2d edition, 1934, Vienna, Anton Schroll & Co.) all the paintings in colour with the exception of the few he does not accept. The reader will also find in this volume precious indications concerning the origine of the works and copies—often based on notes by L. Burchard—, as well as knowledgeable interpretations of the represented subject.

1. (Plate 1) *Cutting for Stone*. Art market, Budapest (74 × 103). Signed: *P. Bruegel 1556*. Perhaps an old copy. See p. 19. • In 1952 in the Dr. J. B. M. Vismans collection, Enschede. Auctioned at Sotheby's, London, on May 9th 1973, No. 104.

2. (Plate 2) *The Adoration of the Magi*. Brussels museum, No. 778 (Watercolour on canvas, 115 × 163). In a poor state of preservation. About 1557. See p. 20. Several copies. • Inv. 39, 29.

3. (Plate 3) *Christ Driving the Money-Changers from the Temple*. Copenhagen museum (102 × 156). Heavily darkened. About 1557. See p. 19. • Inv. 3924.

4. (Plate 4) *Fluvial Landscape with a Peasant Sowing*. Stuyck del Bruyère collection, Antwerp (74 × 102). Signed: 1557. *BRUEGHEL*. See p. 18. • Now in the Timken Art Gallery, San Diego, California.

a. Art market, Paris (Manteau 1934). Good old copy. • Present location unknown.

b. Prado, Madrid, No. 1964. Old copy. • 74 × 106 cm.

5. (Plate 5) *Landscape with the Temptation of St. Anthony*. Art market, New York, 1936 (57.8 × 85.3). About 1557. See p. 18. • Now in the National Gallery (Samuel H. Kress. Collection), Washington D.C.; Acc. No. 112; 58.4 × 85.7 cm.

6. (Plate 5) *The Archangel Michael*. Philips collection, Eindhoven (43 × 29). Authenticity doubtful. If by Bruegel, about 1557. See p. 19. • Now in the Dr. Ir. F. I. Philips collection, Eindhoven.

7. (Plate 6) *The Port of Naples*. Palazzo Doria, Rome (47 × 70). About 1558. See p. 18.

8. (Plate 7) *The Gift of St. Martin*, fragment. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 728a (Watercolour on canvas, 92.5 × 73.5). About 1558. See p. 20.

9. (Plates 8, 9) *Twelve Proverbs*, individual roundels, assembled at a later date. Museum Mayer van der Bergh, Antwerp, No. 46 (74 × 97.5). Signed: 1558 BRVEGHEL. Number and name are indistinct. The usual supposition that the painting was created 1558, cannot be taken for granted. Doubts about the authenticity seem to me unjustified. See p. 20. • Cat. No. 339.

10. (Plates 10, 11) *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*. Brussels museum, No. 800 (Canvas, 73 × 112). About 1558 (?). See p. 20. • Inv. No. 4030.

a. (Plate 10) Herbrand collection, Paris. According to Glück a replica from the master's own hand. • Now in the Musée David et Alice van Buuren, Brussels.

11. (Plates 12, 13) *The Fight between Carnival and Lent*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 716 (118 × 164.5). Signed: BRVEGEL 1559. See p. 21. • Inv. No. 1016.

12. (Plates 14, 15) *The Proverbs*. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, No. 1720 (117 × 163). Signed: BRVEGEL 1559 (the second 5 corrected). See p. 22. Many old copies. • Now in the Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin-Dahlem.

13. (Plates 16, 17) *The Children's Games*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 708 (118 × 161). Signed: BRVEGEL 1560. See p. 22. • Inv. No. 1017.

14. (Plates 18, 19) *The Fall of the Rebel Angels*. Brussels museum, No. 79 (117 × 162). Signed: MDLXII BRVEGEL. See p. 23. • Inv. No. 584.

15. (Plate 22) *Two Monkeys*. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, No. 2077 (20 × 23). Signed: BRVEGEL MDLXII. See p. 23. • Now in the Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin-Dahlem.

16. (Plates 20, 21) *Dulle Griet (Mad Meg.)*. Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp, No. 45 (115 × 161). Signed: the name blurred, MDLXII (the number not quite distinct). See p. 23. • No. 788; 117.4 × 162 cm.

17. (Plate 23) *The Suicide of Saul*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 721 (33.5 × 55). Signed: BRVEGEL MCCCCCLXII (Number not quite distinct). See p. 23. • Inv. No. 1011.

18. (Plates 24, 25) *The Triumph of Death*. Prado, Madrid, No. 1393 (117 × 162). About 1562 (?). See p. 24. Several copies.

19. (Plate 26) *The Tower of Babel*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 715 (114 × 155). Signed: BRVEGEL FE. MCCCCCLXIII. See p. 25. • Inv. No. 1026.

20. (Plate 27) *The Tower of Babel*. van Beuningen collection, Rotterdam (60 × 74.5). On the reverse, the coats of arms of Queen Elisabeth of Valois, the spouse of Philip IV of Spain. About 1563. See p. 25. • Now in the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam; Inv. No. 2443.



21. (Plate 28) *The Peasants Tying up a Bundle of Twigs* (Proverb?). Prince Regent Paul collection, Belgrad (33.5 × 27). About 1563. See p. 27. • Now in the Barber Institute, Birmingham (as Pieter Bruegel II); 36 × 27 cm.
22. (Plate 28) *Head of an Aged Peasant Woman*. Pinakothek, Munich, No. 7057 (22 × 18). About 1563.
23. (Plate 29) *The Death of the Virgin*. Viscount Lee of Fareham collection, Richmond (36 × 54.5). Grisaille. Signed: *BRVEGEL*, the date illegible. See p. 27. • Now at Upton House, Banbury (National Trust).
24. (Plates 30, 31) *The Adoration of the Magi*. National Gallery, London, No. 3556 (108 × 83). Signed: *BRVEGEL MDLXIII*. See p. 27.
25. (Plates 32, 33) *Procession to Calvary*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 712 (124 × 170). Signed: *BRVEGEL MDLXIII*. See p. 25. • Inv. No. 1025.
26. (Plate 34) *The Gloomy Day*, from the sequence of the Months. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 711 (118 × 163). Signed: *BRVEGEL MDLXV*. See p. 26. • Inv. No. 1837.
27. (Plate 35) *Hay Making*, from the sequence of the Months. Prince Lobkowitz collection, Roudnice Castle (Bohemia), (114 × 158). See p. 26. • Now in the National Gallery, Prague; Inv. No. 0-9299, 117 × 161 cm.
28. (Plate 36) *The Corn Harvest*, from the sequence of the Months. Metropolitan Museum, New York, No. B 821-1 (117 × 160). Signed: *BRVEGEL ... LXV*. See p. 26. • Inv. No. 19.164.
29. (Plate 37) *The Return of the Herd*, from the sequence of the Months. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 709 (117 × 159). Signed: *BRVEGEL MDLXV*. See p. 26. • Inv. No. 1018.
30. (Plate 38) *The Hunters in the Snow*, from the sequence of the Months. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 713 (117 × 162). Signed: *BRVEGEL MDLXV*. See p. 26. • Inv. No. 1838.
31. (Plate 39) *Winter Landscape with Skaters*. F. Delporte collection, Brussels (38 × 56). Signed: *BRVEGEL MDLXV*. See p. 27. Many copies. • Now in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (Mr. and Mrs. Delporte-Livrauw Bequest).
32. (Plate 40) *The Wedding Procession*. Spencer Churchill collection, Northwick Park (England) (67.5 × 120). About 1565. See p. 28. Many copies. • Now in the Musée Communal, Brussels, Inv. No. B 35-99; 61.5 × 114.5 cm.
33. (Plate 41) *The Wedding Dance outside a Pub*. Baron Thyssen collection (Schloss

Rohoncz), Lugano (75 × 105). Heavily rubbed, the overpaintings have been recently removed. About 1565. • Now in the Bentinck collection, Paris.

a. Mrs. Dr. Salomonsohn collection, Berlin. Fragment of a replica. • Present location unknown.

34. (Plate 42) *The Wedding Dance in the Open Air*. Institute of Arts, Detroit (119 × 157). Signed: MDLXVI. See p. 27. • Acc. No. 30.374.

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a. (Plate 42) Antwerp Museum. Good old copy, from the Paris Spiridon collection. • Cat. No. 973; 115 × 166 cm.

35. (Plate 43) *The Sermon of St. John the Baptist*. Budapest museum (on loan from the Count Batthyány family) (95 × 160.5). Signed: BRVEGEL MDLXVI. See p. 27. • Inv. No. 51.2829. Many copies.

36. (Plates 44, 45) *The Numbering at Bethlehem*. Brussels museum, No. 680 (117 × 164.5). Signed: BRVEGEL 1566. See p. 27. Many copies. • Inv. No. 3637.

37. (Plate 46) *The Slaughter of the Innocents*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 710 (111 × 160). Signed: BRVEG—Doubts have been occasionally uttered as for the authenticity. If it is the original painting, then probably painted about 1566 as a pendant to the *Numbering*. See p. 28. • Inv. No. 1024.

38. (Plate 47) *The Conversion of St. Paul*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 714 (108 × 156). Signed: BRVEGEL MDLVII. See p. 28. • Inv. 3690.

39. (Plate 48) *The Adoration of the Magi in the Snow*. O. Reinhart collection, Winterthur (35 × 55). Signed: MDLXVII BRVEGEL. See p. 29. Many copies. • Now in the Oskar Reinhart Collection 'Am Römerholz', Winterthur.

40. (Plate 49) *The Land of Cockaigne*. Pinakothek, Munich, No. 8940 (52 × 78). Signed: MDLXVII BRVEGEL. See p. 29.

41. (Plate 50) *The Misanthrope*. Naples museum, No. 585 (Watercolour on canvas, 86 × 85). Signed: BRVEGEL 1568. • Now in the Museo di Capodimonte; Inv. No. 8486; 88 × 88 cm.

42. (Plate 51) *The Parable of the Blind*. Naples museum, No. 584 (Watercolour on canvas, 86 × 154). Signed: BRVEGEL MDLXVII. See p. 29. • Now in the Museo di Capodimonte; Inv. No. 84490. Several copies.

43. (Plate 51) *The Cripples*. Louvre, Paris, No. 1917 (18 × 21). Signed: BRVEGEL MDVXVIII. See p. 29. • Inv. RF 730; 18.4 × 21.7 cm.

44. (Plate 52) *The Peasant and the Birdnester*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 718 (59 × 68). Signed: BRVEGEL MDLXVIII. See p. 29. • Inv. No. 1020.

45. (Plate 53) *The Magpie on the Gallow*. Landesmuseum, Darmstadt, No. 165 (45.9 × 50.8). Signed: *BRUEGEL* 1568. See p. 29.

46. (Plate 54) *The Wedding Banquet*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 717 (114 × 163, a strip has been added at a later date) About 1568. See p. 29. • Inv. No. 1027.

47. (Plate 55) *The Peasant Dance*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 984 (70.5 × 97). About 1568. See p. 29. • Inv. No. 1054.

48. (Plate 56) *The Storm at Sea*. Staatliche Galerie, Vienna, No. 984 (70.5 × 97). About 1568. See p. 29. • Inv. No. 1054.

49. (Plate 57) *The Fight between Lent and Carnival*. Copenhagen museum, No. 58a (24 × 34). This curiously studylike picture is hard to fit into Bruegel's œuvre and has been latterly rejected, by Glück, among others.

50. (Plate 57) *Still Life with Herings and Vessels*. Rotterdam museum, on loan from Fr. Koenig (34 × 48). Fine old copies of this painting are in the Antwerp and Brussels museums. It is a remarkable incunabula of still life painting, in style and brushwork a picture by Bruegel, but as far as I know this attribution has not been widely accepted.

It is possible to augment the view of Bruegel's œuvre somewhat by noting lost works on which there are data in the older literature and in inventories. Engravings can convey an idea of some lost paintings. Glück, *loc. cit.*, pp. 69 ff., has zealously tried to locate such secondary testimony.

There is also a very large volume of paintings in Bruegel's style, for the most part of mediocre quality, that should be examined to establish whether among them are copies in the narrower sense that might tell us something about works now lost. Many such pictures were done by Pieter Bruegel the Younger who signed and dated them. This son of the elder Bruegel was not a very gifted painter, and no great degree of originality is to be expected of him. In a number of clear-cut cases he copied correctly and mechanically, but in other instances he introduced variations and combinations. Other imitators did likewise. If we would draw valid conclusions in respect of lost originals, we must ignore the more or less crude execution and weigh the invention from case to case.

In the following list, which lays no claim to being complete, I have included only such compositions as to my mind plainly reveal the spirit and style of the elder Bruegel. I give Glück's numbering and mention his comments about known copies:

Glück No. 53. *The Ambush*.

Glück No. 51. *Quarrel over a Card Game*.

Glück No. 52. *Visit to the Old Nurse*.

Always in grisaille.

Glück No. 44. *Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery*.

Always in grisaille.

Glück No. 37. *The Faithless Shepherd*, running away, cf. p. 30.

Glück No. 37. *The Faithful Shepherd*, attacked by a wolf.

Glück No. 72. *Country Fair*, with stage and procession.

*The Wedding Dance in the Open Air* (Glück No. 50) exists in several versions, but all are so clearly dependent on the Detroit painting that I am reluctant to conclude there was a second original, since Bruegel always started completely afresh. A particularly large number of copies exist of a *Wedding Dance Indoors*, but upon examining them I dare not conclude with any assurance that any of them is an original by the elder Bruegel.

#### ADDENDA

To the catalogue of Bruegel's œuvre drawn up by Friedländer are added here only four new items which have since been recognized and whose authenticity has not in general been questioned by the acknowledged specialists. Other new attributions are to be found in the Editor's Note and the bibliography.

- Add. 51 (Plate 58) *Landscape with the Calling of St. Peter*, Wavre (Belgium), C. de Pauw coll., 67 × 70 cm, signed and dated bottom left, *P. BRUEGHEL 1553*. Cf. C. de Tolnay, 'An Unknown Early Panel by Pieter Bruegel the Elder', in *The Burlington Magazine*, xcvi, 1955, pp. 238-240 [9].
- Add. 52. (Plate 58) *Landscape with the Flight into Egypt*, London, Count A. Seilern coll., 37.2 × 55.5 cm, signed and dated bottom right, *BRVEGEL MDLXI IIH*, Cf. G. Glück, 'Le paysage avec la Fuite en Egypte de Pierre Bruegel le Vieux', in *Les Arts plastiques*, II, 1948, pp. 447-454 [10].
- Add. 53. (Plate 59) *Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery*, London, Count A. Seilern coll., 24.1 × 34.4 cm, signed and dated bottom left, *BRVEGEL MDLXV*. Cf. F. Grossmann, 'Bruegel's "Woman taken in Adultery" and other Grisailles', in *The Burlington Magazine*, xciv, 1952, pp. 218-229 [11].
- Add. 54. (Plate 59) *The Three Soldiers*, New York, The Frick Collection, No. 65.1.163, 20.3 × 17.8 cm, signed and dated bottom left, *BRVEGEL MD [L?] XVIII*. Cf. E. Munhall, 'The Frick's Brueghel', in *Apollo*, lxxxiii, 1966, p. 393 [12].

## Editor's Note

48 The literature concerning Bruegel's paintings which has been published since the appearance in 1937 of the fourteenth and last volume of Friedländer's *Altniederländische Malerei* is so extensive that there would be little point in trying to give a survey of it within the limits of the Editor's Note. This would in any case conflict with the spirit of that fourteenth volume as Friedländer himself conceived of it.

The small number of publications cited by Friedländer at the beginning of that volume has, however, been supplemented with a few new references (131), whereby some important works have already been mentioned. The student seeking for completeness will consult the major monograph published by R. H. Marijnissen and M. Seidel (141), which gives a fairly comprehensive survey of the Bruegel literature up to 1969. In his article 'Bruegel' in the *Encyclopedia of World Art* (151), F. Grossmann likewise gives a detailed and systematically arranged list of the studies on Bruegel that had appeared up to that time.

In view of this it will be sufficient here to cite some of the most important and in particular the recent works. Among the monographs may be mentioned, in addition to the above-mentioned works, those by G. Jedlicka (116), E. Michel (171), J. B. Knipping (181), R. Genaille (191), G. Faggin (201), R. L. Delevoy (211), F. Grossmann (221), B. Claessens and J. Rousseau (231), G. W. Menzel (241), W. Stechow (251) and C. Brown (261).

A good survey of the œuvre with a *status quaestionis* is to be found in the catalogue of the exhibition organized in 1969 on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of Bruegel's death (271), and a handbook published by various authors in several languages (281).

Apart from the four new attributions included in the Addenda, several other paintings have been published as unknown works by Bruegel by L. van Puyvelde (291), G. Glück (301), H. Schwarzenski (311), F. Grossmann (321), C. de Tolnay (331) and M. Destombes (341).

The detailed article by M. Auner (351) is worth mentioning here as a general study concerning Bruegel, while various separate problems—attributions, iconography, sources of inspiration, etc.—have been dealt with and discussed by F. Grossmann (361) and C. de Tolnay (371) in shorter articles. R. H. Marijnissen (381) has outlined the course which ought to be taken by a systematic scientific examination of Bruegel's œuvre.

In respect of Bruegel's biography it has proved possible to find only a few new pieces of information. J. Coenen (391) and M. Bussels (401) have discussed the painter's origins. C. Bossus (411) thinks his date of birth should be put at around 1522, but J. B. Bedaux and A. van Gool (421), on the other hand, have moved it forward to 1527-8. An important publication is that by A. Montballieu (431) of a document from which it appears that Bruegel painted the altarpiece of the Glovers at Mechlin in 1550-51 along with P. Baltens. The same author (441) thinks that a

collaboration with H. Vredeman de Vries may be deduced from the correct interpretation of a passage in Van Mander.

Bruegel's œuvre cannot be separated from its historical, political, social, intellectual and religious background, a point which is also stressed in most of the monographs. R. H. Marijnissen 1451, J. Francis 1461, C. Terlinden 1471, I. L. Zupnick 1481 and R. Klimov 1491 approach Bruegel from this angle, while C. G. Stridbeck 1501 and J. B. F. van Gils 1511 look for the deeper meaning in his paintings and K. C. Lindsay and B. Huppe 1521 discuss how this can be made out. J. Grauls 1531 points to the link between the language and life of the common people in Bruegel's time and the interpretation of his works.

The influence of older painters on Bruegel and his relationship to Mannerism have been investigated by F. Grossmann 1541, W. Vanbeselaere 1551 and A. Stubbe 1561, and the impact of Antiquity and especially of Italian art by G. Glück 1571, C. de Tolnay 1581, C. G. Stridbeck 1591, F. Grossmann 1601 and H. Vlieghe 1611. Bruegel's relationship to German art has been examined in detail by F. Würtemberger 1621. Other aspects, such as the development of the landscapes, Bruegel's relationship to alchemy and the depiction of ships, have been studied by J. Białostocki 1631, J. van Lennep 1641 and O. Buyssens 1651, J. van Beylen 1661 and F. Smekens 1671, while G. van Camp 1681 has suggested that Bruegel depicted *The Seven Deadly Sins* in a series of tondi. On the other hand R. van Schoute and H. Marcq-Verongstraete have studied the underdrawings in Bruegel's paintings 168a1.

A very large proportion of the publications is devoted to individual works. Although these studies often also discuss the content of the paintings, mostly giving an interpretation in the context of the circumstances of the period and coming to extremely divergent conclusions, it must suffice here merely to mention them in groups under the works in question, which are as follows: *The Adoration of the Magi* (No. 2) 1691, *The Proverbs* (Nos. 9 and 12) 1701, *The Fall of Icarus* (No. 10) 1711, *The Fight between Carnival and Lent* (No. 11) 1721, *The Children's Games* (No. 13) 1731, *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* (No. 14) 1741, *Dulle Griet* (No. 16) 1751, *The Triumph of Death* (No. 18) 1761, *The Tower of Babel* (Nos. 19 and 20) 1771, the series of *The Months* (Nos. 26-30) 1781, *The Wedding Procession* (No. 32) 1791, *The Wedding Dance* (No. 34) 1801, *The Sermon of St. John the Baptist* (No. 35) 1811, *The Slaughter of the Innocents* (No. 37) 1821, *The Land of Cockaigne* (No. 40) 1831, *The Misanthrope* (No. 41) 1841, *The Parable of the Blind* (No. 42) 1851, *The Cripples* (No. 43) 1861, *The Peasant and the Birdnester* (No. 44) 1871, *The Wedding Banquet* (No. 46) 1881, *The Storm at Sea* (No. 48) 1891.

1. G. Glück has in the meantime republished his monograph on Pieter Bruegel with some minor alterations. Publications include: G. Glück, *Pieter Bruegel the Elder* (translated by E. Byam Shaw); London—Paris—New York (1937); Id., *Pieter Bruegel le Vieux* (translated by J. Petichuguenin), Paris 1937; Id., *Das grosse Bruegel-Werk*, Vienna 1951 and 1953; Id., *Pieter Bruegel the Elder*, New York, 1955 and London 1958. Tolnai's book on Bruegel's drawings has also been republished: C. de Tolnay, *Die Zeichnungen Pieter Bruegels. Mit einem kritischen Katalog*, Zürich, 1952; Id., *The Drawings of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. With a Critical Catalogue*, London, 1952. Cf. also L. Münz, *Bruegel. The drawings. Complete edition*, London, 1961; Id., *Pieter Bruegel. Zeichnungen. Vollständige Ausgabe*, Cologne, 1962; K. Arndt, 'Pieter Bruegel der Aeltere und die Geschichte der Waldlandschaft', in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, XIV, pp. 69-121. A new critical catalogue of the engravings after Bruegel has been established by L. Lebeer: L. Lebeer *Beredeneerde catalogus van de prenten naar Pieter Bruegel de Oude* (also published in French; *Catalogue raisonné des estampes de Bruegel l'ancien*), Brussels, 1969. See also the bibliographical entries in the Editor's Note, pp. 48-49.

2. The *de Oude* is not mentioned in the original document (f<sup>o</sup> 107 v<sup>o</sup>), but has been adopted in the publication by P. Rombouts and T. van Lierus, *De Lijgeren en andere historische archieven der Antwerpsche St. Lucasgilde*, I, The Hague, 1864, p. 175.

3. Chatsworth, Devonshire Collection, Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement, Inv. No. 841; 208 × 283 mm.

4. Concerning the attribution of these drawings cf. F. van Leeuwen, *Naar het Levenstudies van "P. Bruegel". Samenvatting van een referaat door mij gehouden in het kader van het werkcollege 16de eeuwse nederlandse tekeningen, o.l.v. Prof. Dr. J. Q. van Regteren Altena, op 13 April 1967, Amsterdam, 1967* (electrostatic copy); Id., 'Iets over het handschrift van de "naar het leven"—tekenaar', in *Oud-Holland*, 85, 1970, pp. 26-32; Id., 'Figuurstudies van "P. Bruegel"', in *Simiolus*, 5, 1971, pp. 139-149; J. A. Spicer, 'The "Naer het Leven" Drawings: by Pieter Bruegel or Roelandt Savery?', in *Master Drawings*, VIII, 1, Spring 1970, pp. 3-30; Id., 'Roelandt Savery's studies in Bohemia', in *Umění*, 18, 1970, pp. 3-30.

5. Kupferstichkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin-Dahlem, Inv. KdZ 4399; 308 × 453 mm.

6. Kupferstichkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin-Dahlem, Inv. KdZ 11641; 232 × 302 mm.

7. The pictures are no longer shown together.

8. Also known under the title of *The Dance under the Gallow*.

9. The study also appeared, in a more extensive form, in *Scritti di Storia dell'Arte in Onore di Lionello Venturi*, I, Rome, 1956, pp. 411-428.

10. Cf. also A. Seilern, *Flemish Paintings and Drawings at 56 Princes Gate London*, London, 1955, p. 8, No. 5.

11. Cf. also A. Seilern, *o. c.*, p. 9, No. 6.

12. Cf. also H. D. M. Grier, *The Frick Collection. An Illustrated Catalogue. Vol. I. Paintings. American, British, Dutch, Flemish and German*, New York, 1968, pp. 142-146.

13. Cf. note 1

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24. G. W. Menzel, *Pieter Bruegel der Aeltere*, Leipzig 1966; 2nd ed. Zürich, 1970.

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28. G. Arpino and P. Bianconi, *L'opera completa di Bruegel*,

Milan, 1967; C. de Tolnay and P. Bianconi, *Das Gesamtwerk von Bruegel*, Lucerne, 1967; Id. and Id., *Tout l'œuvre peint de Bruegel l'Ancien*, Paris, 1968; R. Hughes and P. Bianconi, *The Complete Painting of Bruegel*, New York, 1970.

29. *The Massacre of the Innocents*, 115 × 164.5 cm, Brussels, Baron Descamps coll. L. van Puyvelde, 'Un nouveau Massacre des Innocents de Pierre Bruegel l'Ancien', in *Annuaire des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 1, 1938, pp. 99-109; *Landscape with St. Christopher*, 45.5 × 64.8 cm., signed and dated: BRUEGEL MDL XIII, Brussels, private coll. L. van Puyvelde, 'Un Paysage avec Saint Christophe de Pierre Bruegel l'Ancien', in *Pantheon*, XVIII, 1960, pp. 138-141.

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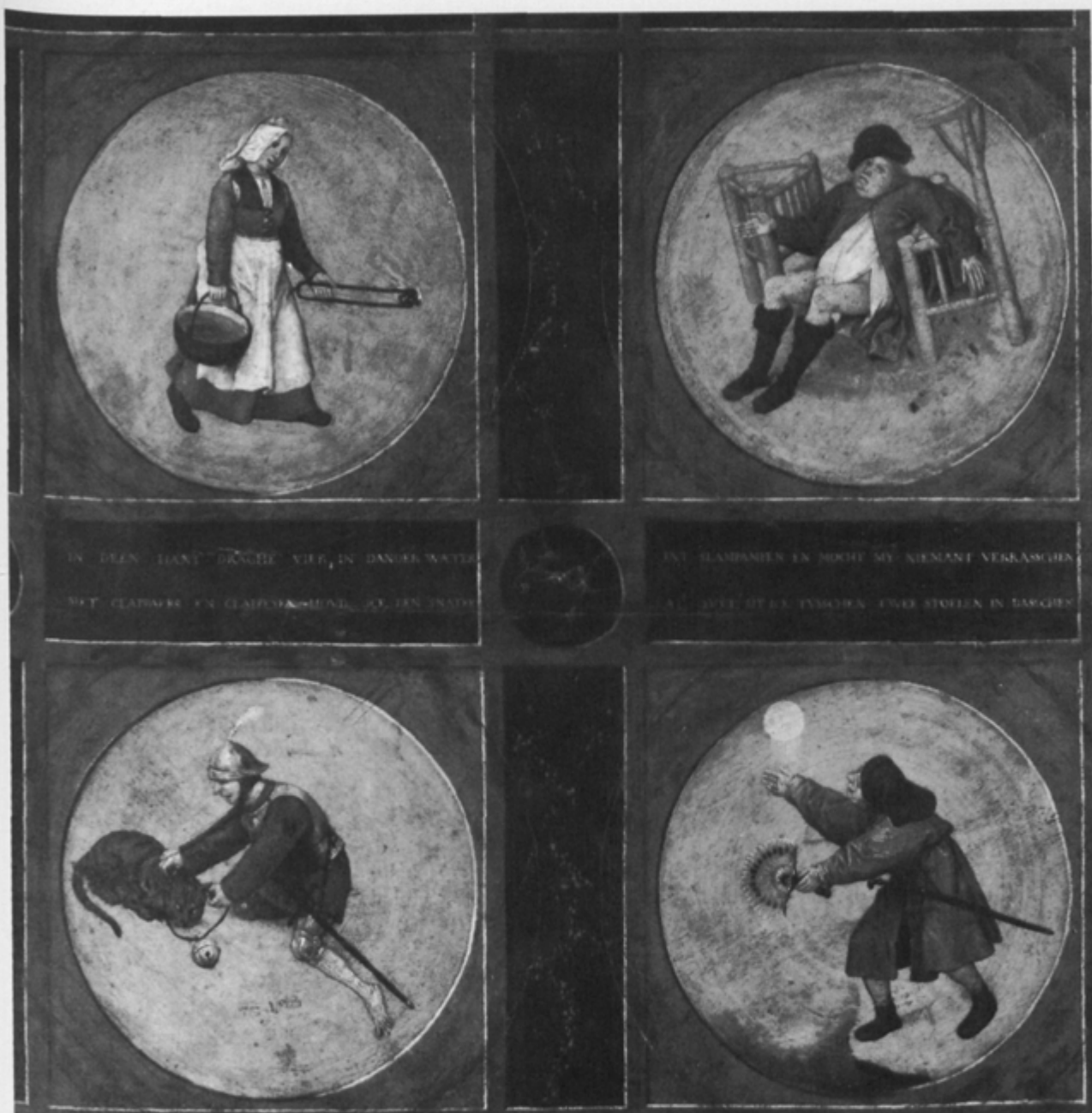




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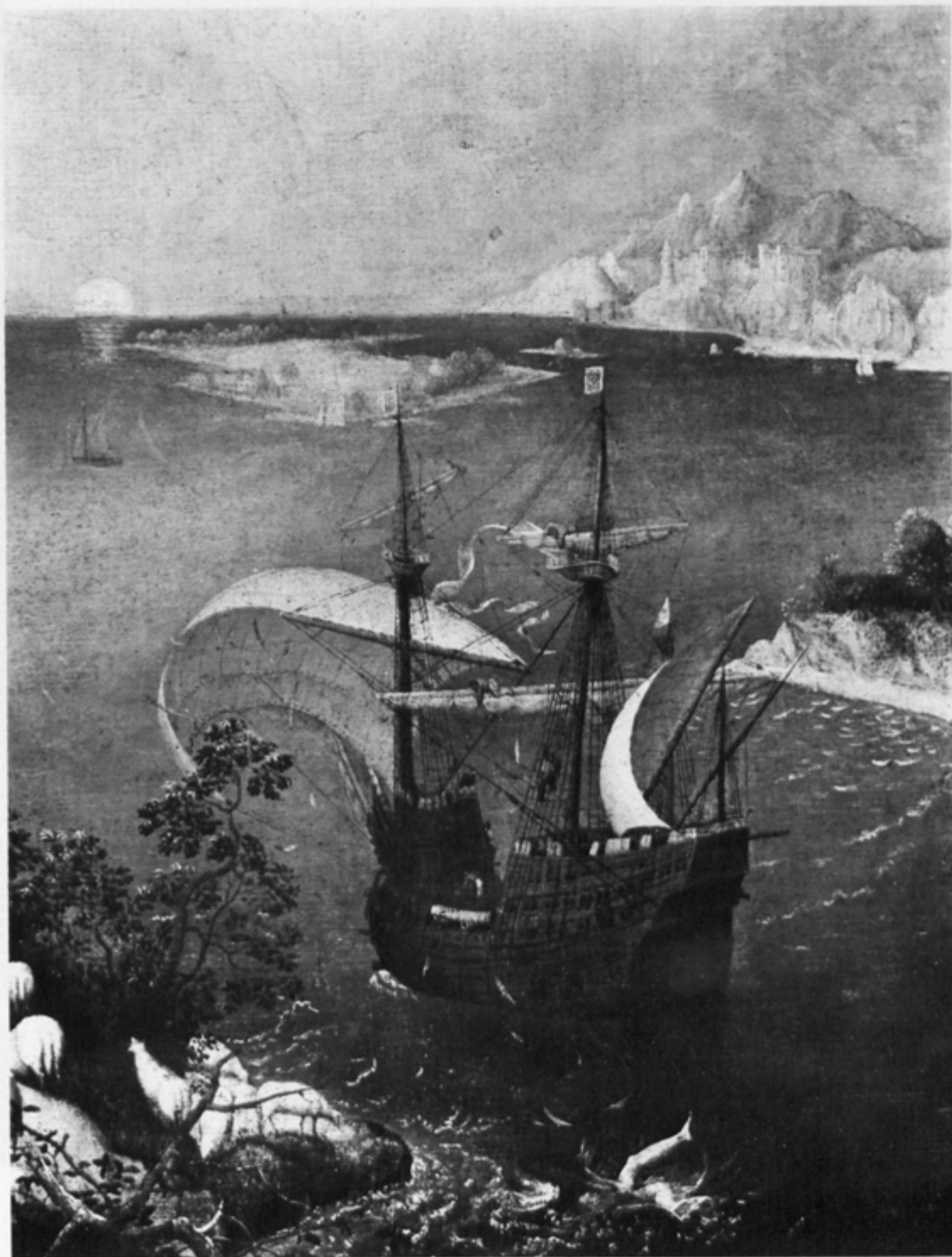
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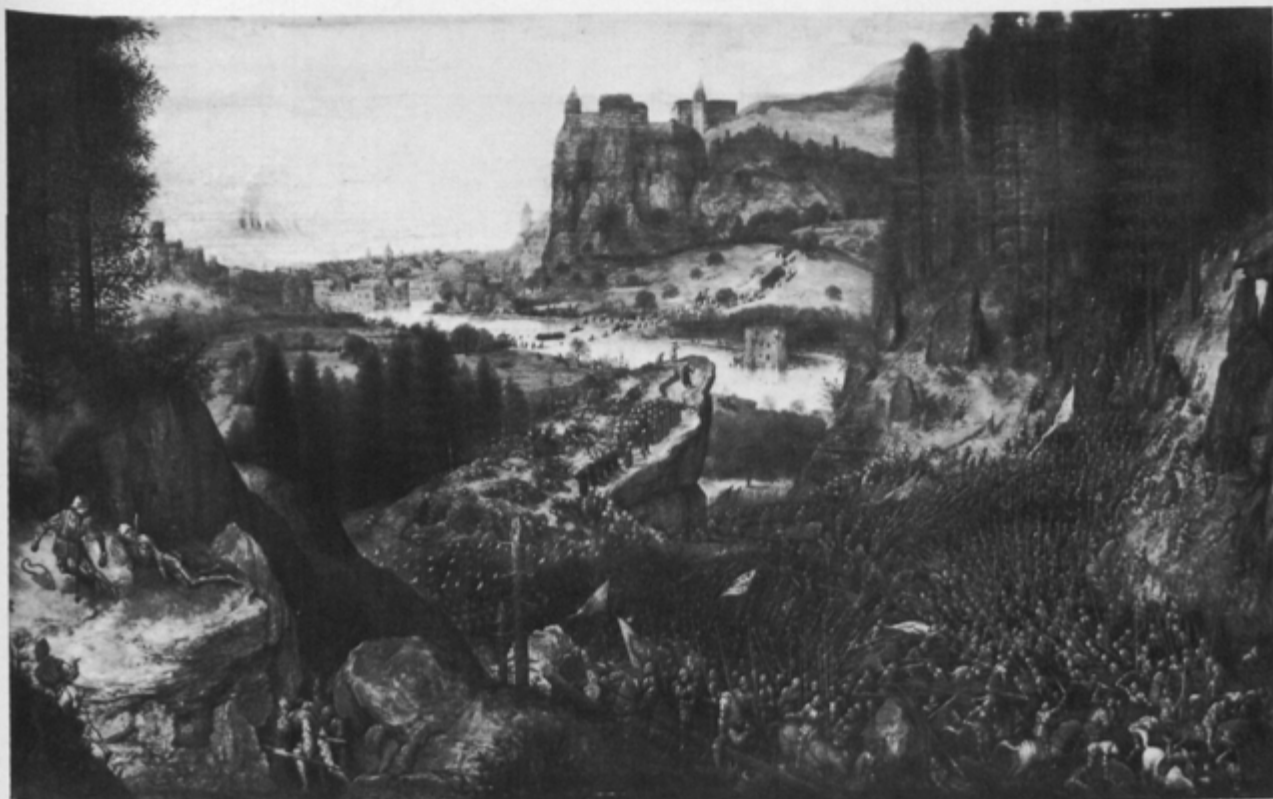


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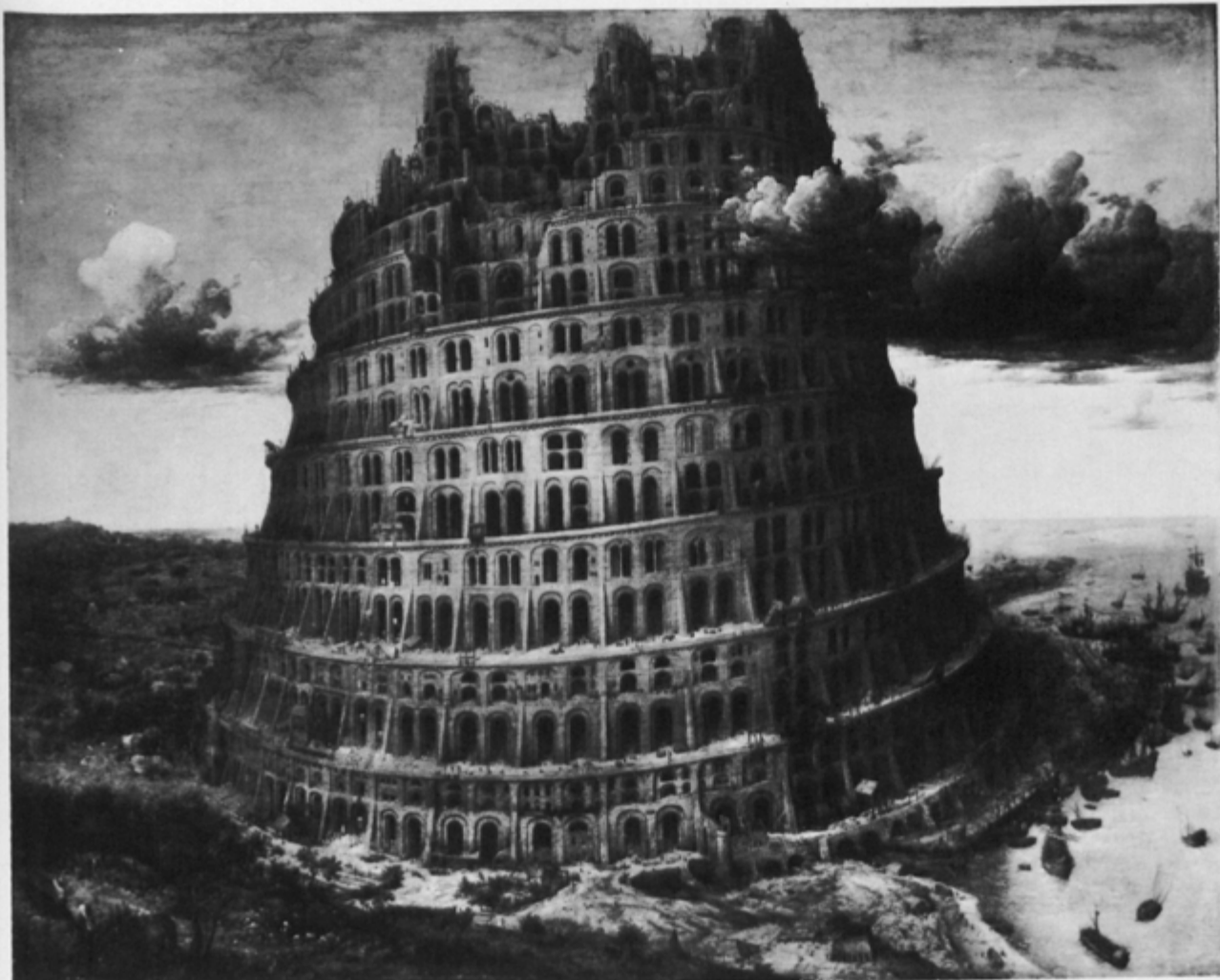


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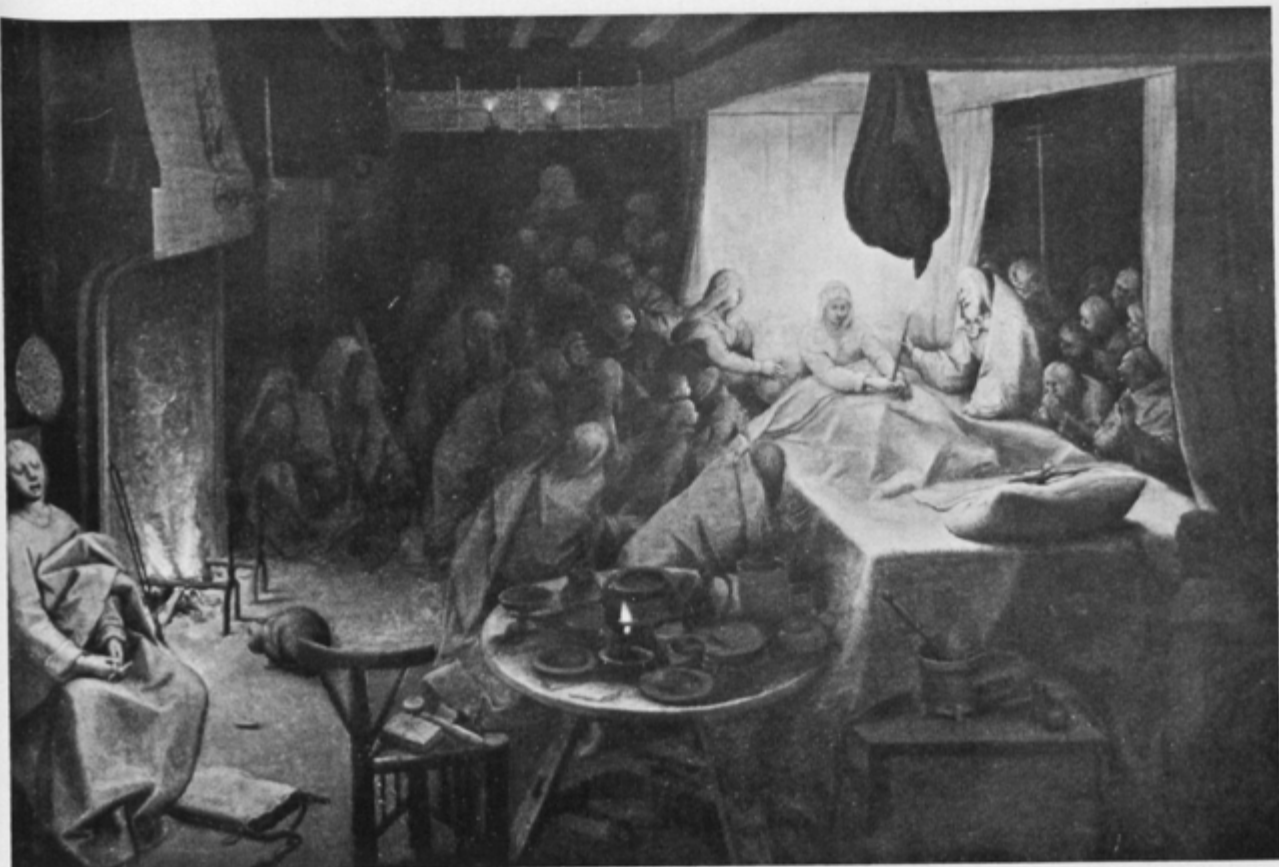
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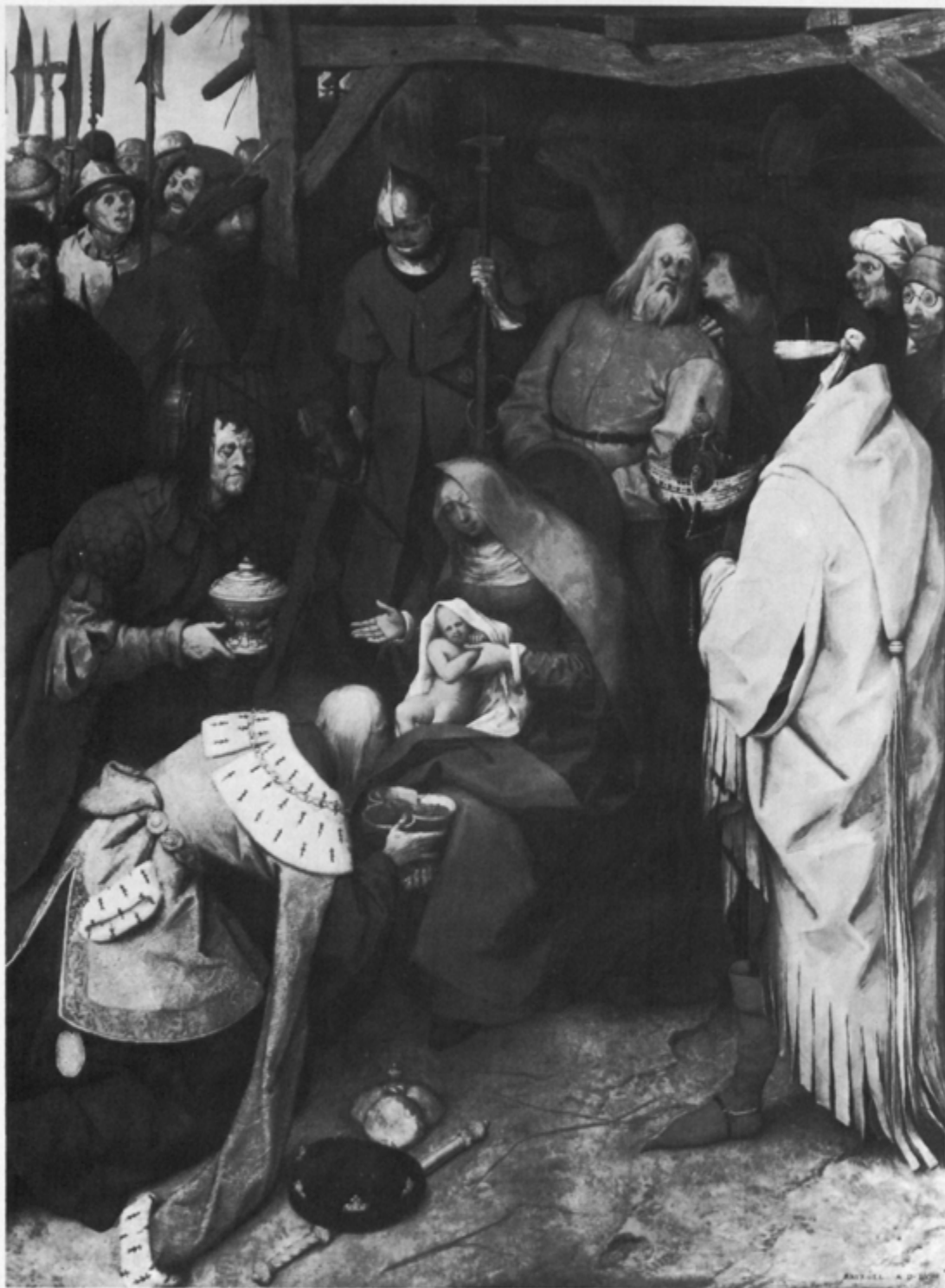




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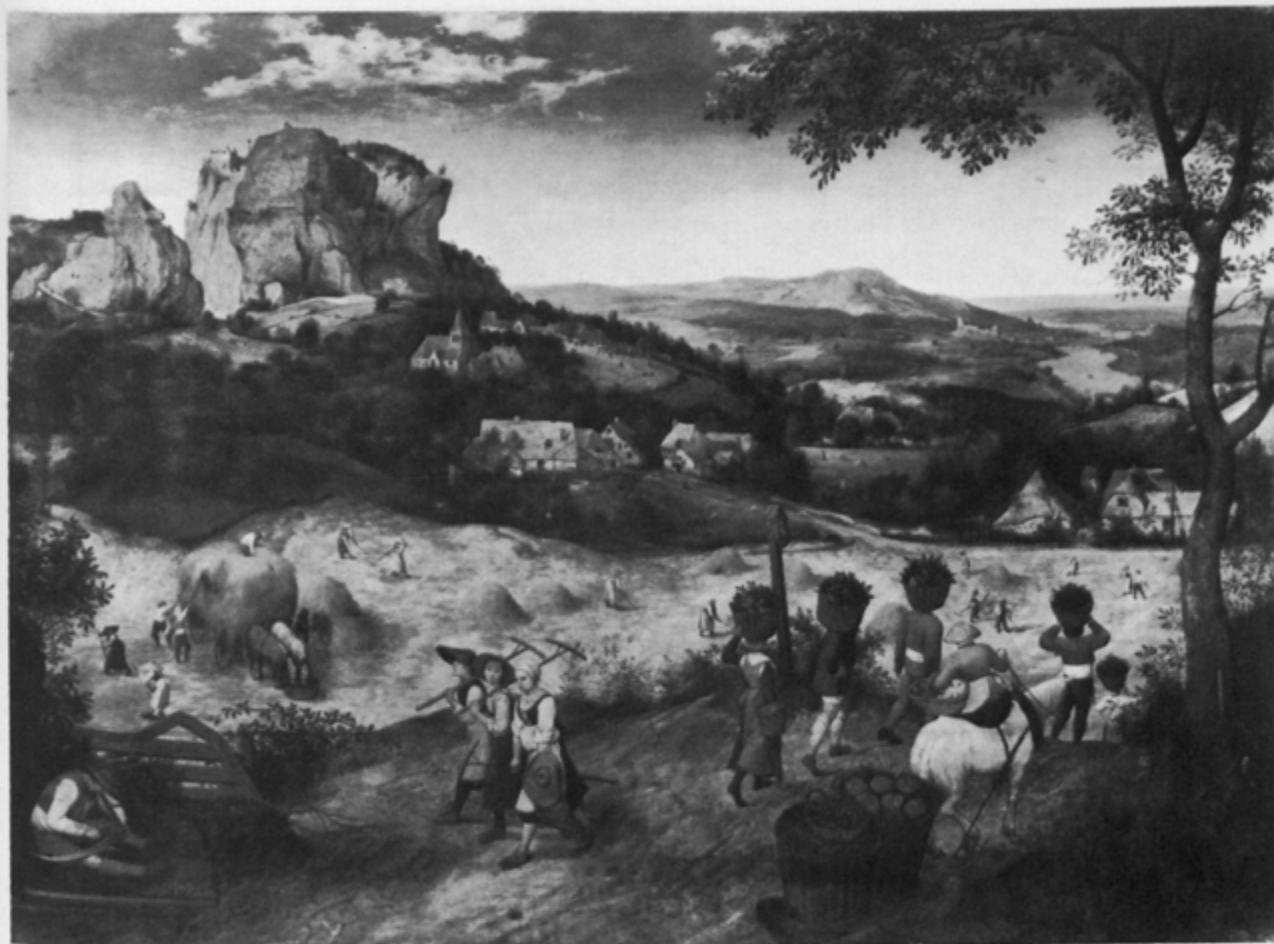
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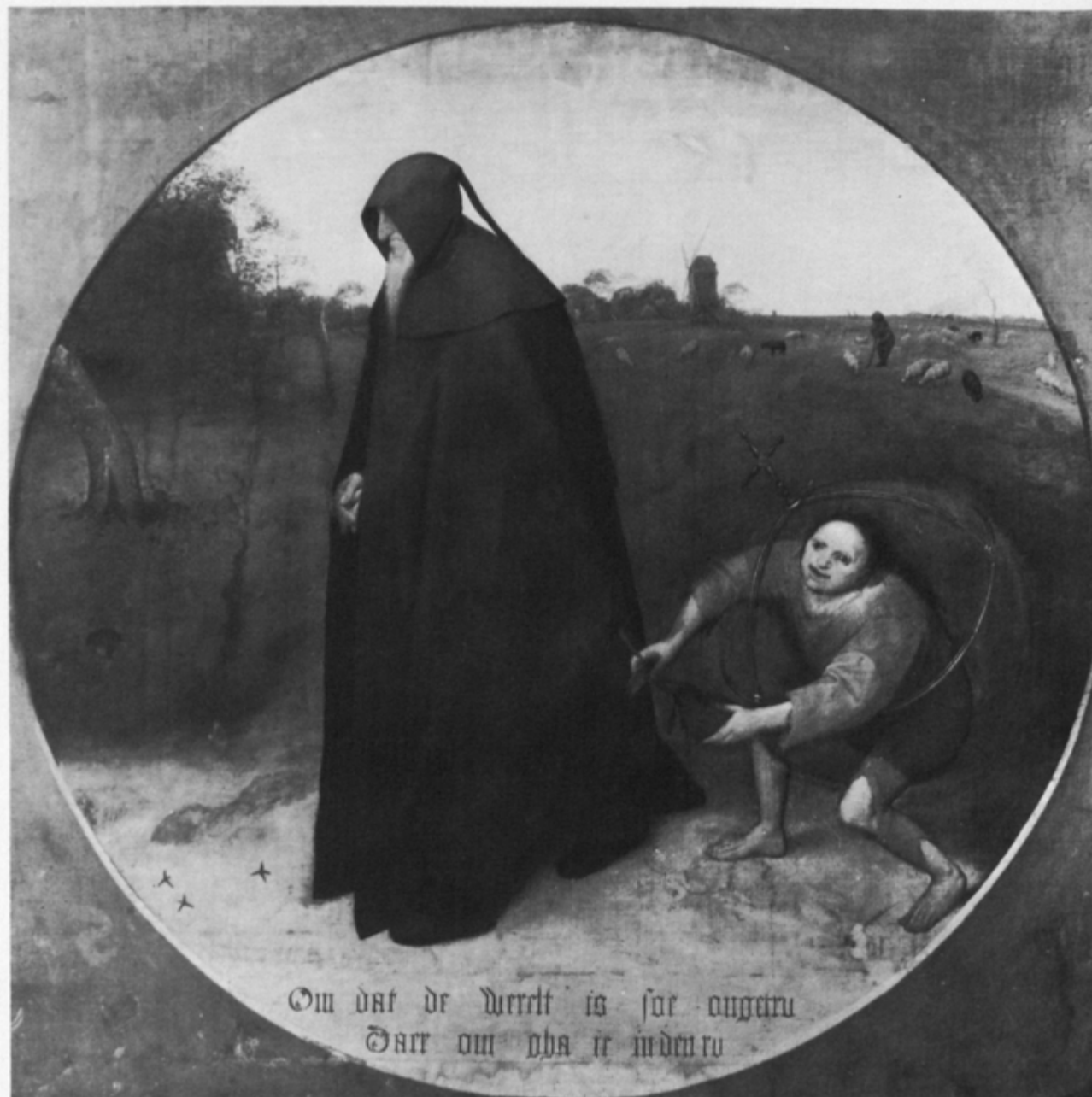




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